



Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts

Affiliated with the International Association of Fire Fighters AFL-CIO CLC

July 10, 2020

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka
President of the Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senate President Spilka:

On behalf of the over 12,000 active members and 222 locals of the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts (PFFM), I write to express our concerns relative to **S. 2800 *An Act to reform police standards and shift resources to build a more equitable, fair and just commonwealth that values Black lives and communities of color.***

We believe the ongoing nationwide discussions about police, race and community relations present an unprecedented opportunity to improve police training and standards. We, along with the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Policy Group and Black and Latino Legislative Caucus, support the promotion of diversity, bans on chokeholds and excessive force, standardized training of procedures and protocols, and an independent body including law enforcement experts to oversee accreditation and certification.

However, we are concerned with the scope of S. 2800, the legislative process that some of the provisions proposed went through, and most importantly, the precedent it could set for the rights and protections of not only public safety employees, but all public employees.

Specifically, the PFFM has concerns with the following policies contained in S. 2800:

1. Whereas all professional licensing agencies in Massachusetts include an overwhelming majority of individuals from the profession, S.2800 proposes that half the regulators not be in law enforcement.
2. Deprives police officers of due process by mandating loss of employment even for allegations overturned by neutral factfinders or agencies.
3. Increases lawsuits against all public employees and eliminates qualified immunity.

Richard MacKinnon Jr.
President

Billy Cabral
Secretary-Treasurer

2 Center Plaza
Suite 4M
Boston, MA 02108

📞 617.523.4506

📠 877.470.7336

PFFM.ORG



Richard MacKinnon Jr.
President

Billy Cabral
Secretary-Treasurer

Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts

Affiliated with the International Association of Fire Fighters AFL-CIO CLC

Given your background as a mediator and arbitrator specializing in labor and employment law, we know you understand and appreciate the case law, the hard-fought battles that all employees have waged over the years, the proud history Massachusetts has protecting its workforce, and the potential precedents that could be established.

The PFFM urges you and the Massachusetts Senate to consider removing these policies from S. 2800 and conducting a full legislative and public hearing process to ensure the opinions of all public employees are heard and robustly debated on these matters to avoid any unintended consequences and adverse legal precedent that could arise to the detriment of public employees, the backbone of our municipalities and the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration during these unprecedented times and I am available at your convenience to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,

Richard MacKinnon, Jr.
President
Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts

cc: Massachusetts Senate

2 Center Plaza
Suite 4M
Boston, MA 02108
☎ 617.523.4506
☎ 877.470.7336
PFFM.ORG