



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

TREASURER SHAWN T. WOODEN

For Immediate Release: Monday, July 27, 2020

STATE TREASURER SHAWN WOODEN CALLS ON CONNECTICUT STATE SENATE TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BILL



Remarks of Treasurer Wooden, As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you all for coming out on this sweltering hot day. We're here today, because tomorrow the Connecticut State Senate will take a vote on the police accountability bill and the results will either land in favor of prioritizing the safety and well-being of all families in Connecticut, or it will

fall short of answering the call that meets this moment of racial reckoning in America, including in Connecticut.

Now, some people have attempted to make this bill a litmus test on whether or not we support the police. It's not. I want to clearly acknowledge that I support law enforcement. I support the many good women and men that honor their oath to protect and serve every day. When my cousin was killed by gun violence, they were diligent in finding his killer and bringing him to justice. I know what good policing looks like.

I also know that we need to change the culture of policing. And, we do that by better training, increased transparency and increased accountability. Police officers need to be supported and, yes, bad police officers who are guilty of wrongdoing must also be held accountable.

It's time for those of us entrusted with leadership by the people of Connecticut, to answer the calls of communities that have been unheard for so long. It's time for action.

The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Connecticut's Jose Soto, and countless others have brought us to our modern day Emmet Till moment. It's a moment where we, as a country and a state, are confronted with an undeniable reality that the status quo is holding us back.

There have been protests and rallies everywhere, from Hartford, West Hartford, East Hartford, to New Haven, to Manchester, to Suffield, to Ellington, to Mansfield, to Fairfield, to Stamford, and to New London and the list goes on and on.

I applaud the work of the House in passing this bill on Friday. I know for many it was the most difficult vote they have taken as well as the most consequential. But, leadership is often uncomfortable and I applaud them for leading on this important piece of legislation.

Tomorrow is the Senate's opportunity to lead. And, we are here today to make the case that it should not be squandered.

On July 17th, the same day of the public hearing on this bill, we lost two beloved civil rights heroes who committed their lives to advancing racial and social justice: Congressman John Lewis and Reverend CT Vivian.

It really is up to us to pick up the torch to address injustice, whether it's police reform, health care disparities, educational disparities, or economic disparities.

Continuing their work is how we're going to move Connecticut forward, and fully realize the ideals for which Congressman Lewis and Rev. Vivian fought. Because of them and the many people who are continually lifting their voices and marching in the streets, I remain hopeful that America will continue on its journey towards a more perfect union. I look to our state senators now and urge passage of this bill. I have talked to the Governor and he has committed to sign it.

As the father of two black boys, I have had some heart wrenching conversations about the realities of justice and racism in this country and, quite frankly, about how to stay safe around the police in Connecticut. So, let us come together and make meaningful change now so that future generations can thrive in a better Connecticut, a better America.

###