



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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Chairman Maroney and D'Agostino, Ranking Members Cicarella and Rutigliano, and the distinguished members of the General Law Committee,

The Connecticut Police Chief Association (CPCA) is an association that represents the interests of all the police chiefs in the state. Collectively, the members of the association oversee the operation of over 7,000 law enforcement personnel and close to 100 law enforcement agencies. CPCA would like to offer a position on the following bill.

SB 3, AN ACT CONCERNING CONSUMER PROTECTION

The use of unmanned aircraft, also known as drones have become a valuable asset to law enforcement in Connecticut. They have expanded the use of law enforcement's ability to assist in situations that an officer would be unable to reach in a timely matter. Drones have been used to deliver flotation devices to individuals who are struggling to stay afloat in bodies of water. They also are used for accident reconstruction and survey a scene from a higher vantage point. They are also used to locate a missing person by using different camera filters to locate them in a timely manner when weather conditions put the missing persons health at risk.

CPCA opposes section 4 of SB 3. While this section is well intentioned in terms of attempting to not have foreign manufacturers of drones being used by the public sector, law enforcement has already made large investments into drone equipment manufactured overseas. This bill would force agencies to simply abandon their drone programs for which they invest large some of their money. Law enforcement agencies make calculated decisions when purchasing drones that are cost effective, while also being a quality product that can assist law enforcement in any conditions present to them.

The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association asks the General Law Committee to remove section 4 from the bill. This section would hurt municipalities and law enforcement agencies in a difficult situation that would result in the loss of drone programs across towns and cities.

Another reason law enforcements use of drones made by manufacturers, comes down to supply chain and the availability of replacement parts. Foreign manufacturers are ahead of their United States competitors regarding time in the drone industry. These companies have a well established and reliable replacement of drone parts that are inevitably needed when drones are damaged through different uses. If an agency damages their drone that is made by a foreign manufacturer, they can expect a replacement part to arrive within 1-3 business days. If they are relying on a domestic drone manufacturer, the wait times for replacement parts have taken longer.

While section 4 of SB 3 is well intentioned, the CPCA asks that the committee please remove it from the bill. As a ban on foreign manufactured drones would be catastrophic to law enforcement agencies who would be forced to disband their drone program, which took years to build.