

Angel Lopez Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 5596

March 1, 2021

To the House Committee on State Government & Elections,

My name is Angel Lopez, I am representing myself, a Puerto Rican resident of Providence for 31 years. I strongly oppose H 5596 for two reasons, there is nothing being done about police brutality in this state and the costs associated with the RMS database are not mentioned or limited. Both these reasons combined will result in budgetary shortfalls that will affect the entire state.

Page 1 lines 11-13 explain what the RMS will include, some are: citations, arrests, warrants, and incident reports, but the bill does not mention any limits to the information, that the database will not include. This will increase the associated expenses of the RMS.

The nine-member board described on page 2 lines 9 through 23 does not include an independent party who can communicate the concerns of and advocate for highly policed communities. This fact will also drive the associated costs of a limitless database even higher.

Page 3 lines 17-23 titled Restricted Receipt Account, reveals that the General Assembly will budget for associated costs of the RMS within the general fund subjected to appropriation. Meaning other unrestricted budgeted line items within the General Fund may be used to fund the RMS and associated costs. Unrestricted funds are usually public services. Database costs with internal virtual storage of this magnitude are upwards of \$200 Million overnight.

Lines 17 and 18 of page 1 states, all state and local law enforcement agencies that interface with the RMS must do so at their own expense. This will not fund the associated costs of the database, but what it will do is allow for violent Police officers to access information about any person on the database increasing the police brutality incidents especially those based on religious beliefs, skin color, sexual orientation, and/or culture. The communities will be the ones liable to pay for the police violence related court expenses and settlements. In simple terms, unrestricted funds used to fund the RMS at state level will cause unrestricted funds at local levels to be used to pay for police violence and interfacing with the database. This is at the expense of public services such as street repairs, garbage pick-ups, and schools.

I submitted for the record of this hearing a report published by the Action Center on Race and the Economy titled, "Police Brutality Bonds How Wall Street Profits from Police Violence." Find the report here: https://acrecampaigns.org/research_post/police-brutality-bonds/. I urge all members of this committee to oppose House Bill 5596 and please read the report. The state is currently in control of Providence Schools. As a former student of the Providence school system, from grades one through twelve I say, please do not take any more money away from the students of Providence. This is not the time to add another sink hole to our budget.

Thank You for taking the time to read this,

Angel Lopez

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