

Dear Committee Members,

I am a constituent in Senator Sara Gelser's and Representative Dan Rayfield's districts. I am in support of bills LC 17, LC 18, LC 19, and LC 20. I feel especially strongly about LC 19, which focuses on accountability and trust, and LC 17, which will help to de-escalate, rather than add to the violence.

I have to tell you that I fully respect the law and the ideals of law enforcement that keep our communities safe, and do so in just, fair and non-escalating ways. Currently, that is too often not the case, and for many it has never been true. We need major overhauls in the training of law enforcement officers, and we need to hold all law enforcement officers accountable for their actions, just as we hold other public servants accountable. Because their jobs put people at risk (the public, their fellow officers, as well as themselves), the need for accountability is even more important.

I urge you to support these Legislative Concepts. We need to build the trust that people want to feel in those serving them as safety officers. These pieces of legislation have the potential to do that. They are a first step.

As we work towards changing the culture and training of law enforcement officers so that a new generation of Officers of the Peace emerges, knowing they will be held accountable for their actions, knowing that they can't hide behind their shields, badges, and unions, knowing that the use of crowd-control weapons will not be an option, we will build the kind of collaborative communities that are safe for all, including the officers. All dreams start somewhere. LC 17, 18, 19, and 20 are first steps in de-escalation and can bring about a new mindset of what it means to be a law enforcement officer, and have the respect of those you are called to serve.

Thank you for considering these pieces of legislation.

Respectfully,

Melinda Sayavedra