

Regarding police qualified immunity

Hello,

I am writing you today to voice my support for the ending of qualified immunity for police officers.

As a board certified pharmacist in Oregon, I have a duty to protect the public and my patients through the safe dispensing of medications. This duty also comes with the responsibility that if I make an error, it may cause grievous harm or death to a patient which I will be held legally responsible for by the Oregon Board of Pharmacy, and likely the patient or their family as well. Patients can even be harmed by medications even after I have done my due diligence to try to ensure therapy is safe and appropriate and I can still be held legally responsible for the results.

Police officers also have a duty to protect citizens similarly to me in my field, however, unlike the police, I am not afforded the luxury of qualified immunity in the event a patient is harmed even when I have done my due diligence to ensure safe dispensing. Police officers and pharmacists enter their professions knowing lives are on the line in the course of their duties yet police get qualified immunity and I have to maintain malpractice insurance.

It is not logical that professions responsible for the safety of the public be treated differently when it comes to being held accountable for mistakes and inadvertent harm. The burden of maintaining malpractice insurance and awareness that I will be held legally responsible for harm that occurs during my practice weighs on me with every prescription I dispense. Having qualified immunity as the police do would certainly encourage a more cavalier attitude to the practice of pharmacy, why would the same not hold true to the police?

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