

Myth: Police officers will be held personally liable and can lose their homes if sued.

Fact: Nothing in the bill creates new personal liability for police officers. This bill only lifts qualified immunity in the most egregious cases – when an officer **intentionally** breaks the law AND acts in **malicious, wanton and willful** manner to violate a person’s rights. But even in these cases, which will be rare, when an officer can be found liable, the officer’s property and assets are NOT at risk. Qualified immunity is NOT eliminated by this bill. Officers who make mistakes are NOT held personally liable. Actions must be intentional, willful, wanton and malicious to meet the standard for accountability. Before this law passed, there was no state legal standard to hold an officer personally liable ever, no matter how egregious the action.

Myth: Democrats don’t support police. Democrats want to defund police.

Fact: Democrats DO support police and INCREASE their funding. In 2019, Democrats passed a bill that gave police officers salary increases and paid for more training. At \$23.3 million it was called the “most expensive” contract approved by the legislature in 2019. (I voted no). The 2020 Police Accountability Law provides MORE funding for police -- \$4 million in funding for body and dashboard cameras. I support our police.

Myth: This law will cause police officers to not respond to crimes.

Fact: Even if an officer makes a good faith mistake, meaning they thought they were doing the right thing, they would still be protected by qualified immunity. If officers aren’t responding to crimes, they are not doing fulfilling their professional responsibility to serve and protect.

Myth: This law makes it harder to recruit police officers and cause good cops to retire.

Fact: When the emotion and misinformation subsides, this law will increase morale among police officers because no officer will have to tolerate working with a “bad apple.” Over time, recruitment will improve too. This is true in any industry. When bad behavior is no longer tolerated, employee morale improves as do recruitment and outreach efforts.

Myth: Police will not be allowed to use deadly force. They can’t draw their guns when needed.

Fact: Police can use deadly force when they have an objectively reasonable belief that deadly force is necessary. That means the officer believes it is needed, and that belief is considered reasonable by other officers. Standard practice.

Myth: This law is anti-police.

Fact: Standardized training and certification for all state and municipal police assures that every officer gets the best training. This bill requires that each police unit be accredited, which also ensures the highest standards of policing. Training to diffuse situations and avoid violence keeps police officers and community members safer. This prevents unnecessary violence.