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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 20-S 2867,  
CREATING A LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE TO REVIEW THE  
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' BILL OF RIGHTS  
June 15, 2020**

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this resolution and urges its passage. A quarter of a century has passed since the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBOR) has been given any sort of thorough review, and in light of recent events, the time is ripe for its reexamination.

The ACLU strongly believes in due process for police officers, and for all public employees. But the LEOBOR provides special layers of procedural protection that apply to no other government employees. Ironically, it also provides police officers facing internal disciplinary proceedings greater rights than those available to the criminal defendants arrested by these same officers.

Whatever the appropriate level of administrative due process for police officers should be, the issue deserves comprehensive reconsideration and a public airing. At a time when legitimate questions are being raised throughout the country about the extent of police misconduct and whether self-imposed barriers may be preventing appropriate accountability, this proposed task force is a simple first step in trying to restore trust between the police and the community.

At the same time, the General Assembly should not think its work is done in creating a task force like this. There are many other substantive measures that deserve consideration and action by this body at the earliest possible opportunity. Legislatures across the country have already begun passing bills to promote stronger police accountability – from enacting use-of-force limits to eradicating the judge-made principle of “qualified immunity” that often allows serious police misconduct to go unpunished. The creation of the task force envisioned by S-2867 should be a complement to, not a substitute for, a review of these other important issues as well.

With that understanding, we urge passage of this resolution.