

From:

The Campaign to End Qualified Immunity
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To:

President and Majority Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Deputy Majority Leader, Senator Michael Gianaris
Speaker, Representative Carl Heastie
Speaker Pro Tempore, Representative Jeffrion L. Aubry
Majority Leader, Representative Crystal Peoples-Stokes
CC: New York State Senate and Assembly Leadership

RE: Memorandum of Support for S 1991

Dear Honorable Senate and Assembly members of New York State,

The Campaign to End Qualified Immunity is writing in support of the passage of S 1991, urging you and others to vote “AYE” on this bill.

We’ve listened to all the concerns surrounding ending qualified immunity. That police officers should not have to worry about “frivolous” lawsuits. That without qualified immunity, police units won’t be able to recruit. That ending qualified immunity is another way of saying “abolish the police.”

All these arguments are simply not true.

Yes, police officers have a tough job. But there’s nothing “frivolous” about brutalizing Black people. Nothing “frivolous” about violating a citizen’s constitutional rights. The people of New York State deserve good cops defending their communities, not bad apples roaming the streets. Do New York State’s police units want to attract the sort of person who is unwilling to be held accountable for their actions—especially when these actions harm, maim, and even kill? And as for “abolishing the police,” on the contrary. We seek to end qualified immunity in New York because we want to build better policing, not abolish it. We support good law enforcement. However, there’s no denying that there are some seriously bad cops out there. Good cops will not be affected by ending qualified immunity. Only the bad ones will be impacted.

S 1991 supports good cops by upholding accountability. And accountability creates trust. Without trust, good cops can’t do their jobs. We owe it to the good cops to end a bad doctrine.

The calls to end qualified immunity have grown significantly, both in New York and nationwide, this past year. There’s no denying that Americans want more accountability. According to a [Pew Research poll](#), 66 percent of Americans believe that civilians should have the power to sue

police officers for misconduct, and lawmakers across the country are listening to their constituents.

Colorado and New Mexico recently eliminated qualified immunity. And here in the Empire State, New York City became the largest municipality in the country to limit qualified immunity. In fact, the [Police Benevolent Association](#) recently released a memo to its members admitting that limiting qualified immunity would serve its purpose in forcing law enforcement officers to protect the civil rights of New Yorkers.

When it comes to accountability, we believe that New York State can help set an example for the rest of the country. Passing S 1991 and ending qualified immunity for bad cops will champion the rights of every New Yorker. It will uphold transparency and justice.

Accountability, transparency, and justice—what everyone in this state deserves.

Thank you.

The Campaign to End Qualified Immunity