



Subject: State House News Service Reports on MassCOP Response

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Union Head: Reform Bill Punishes "Police Just For Being Police"

The state's largest law enforcement union called a compromise police reform bill that will be voted on Tuesday the "final attack" by lawmakers on Bay State police, who union leaders said are being scapegoated for violence incidents that occurred in other states. In a letter to his 4,300 members, Massachusetts Coalition of Police President Scott Hovsepien said the final policing bill that emerged from a House and Senate conference committee Monday evening was "crowded" with punitive measures for police and would add layers of unnecessary bureaucracy. The union urged the 66 lawmakers who voted against earlier versions of the bill to oppose this compromise version as well, and to lobby their colleagues to join them. Hovsepien said that if MassCOP loses to the "iron hand" of leadership in the House and Senate it would appeal to Gov. Charlie Baker for a veto. "They seek to punish police just for being police," Hovsepien wrote in a [two-page letter](#) to union members. MassCOP joins the union representing State Police troopers in opposing the bill. The heart of the bill creates a police accountability panel, to be known as the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, that would certify officers every three years and could revoke certification for officers found to commit wrongdoing, such as excessive use of force or falsifying timesheets. MassCOP specifically took issue with a provision that would allow the new POST Commission to strip a police officer of his or her license before the completion of an internal investigation and disciplinary hearing. Hovsepien said the nine-member commission, which must include at least three police officers, including one chief, had "minimal representation" from anyone experienced in law enforcement. The union also called the negotiations between the House and Senate over the bill "grossly unfair and opaque," taking issue with the secrecy of the talks, which is a custom on Beacon Hill regardless of the issue. "We now know

that the process has ended in the same way it began - with law enforcement professionals who protect the citizens of this Commonwealth each day being disregarded, dismissed and disrespected," Hovsepian wrote. One win MassCOP celebrated was the inclusion of a public hearing process next year to study qualified immunity from civil lawsuits for police, but Hovsepian called it a "hollow victory" because the bill also revokes the protection from civil lawsuits for any officer stripped of their license by the POST Commission for wrongdoing.

- Matt Murphy/SHNS