

Opponent Testimony To House Bill 84  
March 29,2023  
Akii Butler, Communications Manager

Chair Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Homeland Security Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Akii Butler. I am a 26 year-old community member, and organizer. I am here today to strongly oppose House Bill 84 and urge you to vote no.

To keep this short, I am strongly against lowering the minimum age to become a peace officer because I know that in the long run, it will do more harm than good. My main issues with the bill besides lowering the age is that there seem to be no parameters. Essentially someone fresh out of high school or currently in high school has the chance to become a peace officer. As someone who was in high school long ago, I can tell you that no 18 year old has developed the mental and emotional capacity to do this job to the standards that the community would like to see.

Time and time again we see officers who have a decade or more of experience make rookie mistakes that cost us the lives of our community members. Not only that, but research shows that the frontal lobe of our brain(what controls our planning, executions, impulse control etc.) isn't developed until our mid to late twenties, and sometimes even our thirties. This reason alone should be enough for you to vote no on this bill.

Lastly, I will say there is one part referenced in this bill that I agree with, and it's adding a mental health exam along with a physical exam that officers must pass, in order to become an officer. This is something many members of the community want. There are far too many examples of officers not being able to handle the mental toll of the job, or that they have underlying anger issues that affect the way they do their job, and the community suffers because of it. It is important that officers not only be physically fit but also, mentally fit as well.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill and make the proper arrangements to introduce mental health screenings to those hoping to become officers. I Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Akii Butler

Sources: Sowell ER, Thompson PM, Holmes CJ, et al. In vivo evidence for post-adolescent brain maturation in frontal and striatal regions. *Nature Neurosci.* 1999;2:859–61. [[PubMed](#)]  
[[Google Scholar](#)]