

Councilman David James Comments March 15, 2021

My name is David James and I serve as president of Louisville Metro Council. I served as Metro Council president when we passed a robust prohibition on the use of no-knock warrants, also known as Breonna's Law.

We named our ordinance after Breonna Taylor to honor her legacy and to show our community how seriously we took the tragedy of her death. Breonna Taylor was unarmed when she was shot to death in her own home. It had now been a year without her. A year her mother has been without her daughter, a year her sister has lived without her Bree.

Our commitment is not only to Breonna and her family, it is to our city – a community grieving a tremendous injustice. As I reflect on the last year, I now know it was not just Louisville grieving; it was all of Kentucky. I was relieved - heartened - to see action at the statehouse to restrict the use of no-knock warrants. This is the right thing to do for our state.

I am deeply disappointed to see such absurd amendments to Senate Bill 4 – a measure so close to final passage and so reasonable for our commonwealth.

House Floor Amendment 2 is problematic for several reasons. Anyone executing any warrant should be armed with a body camera, period. This protects law enforcement and the public. Eliminating limitations on special training requirements is foolhardy. The other erosions in this amendment, such as changing when a no-knock warrant can be executed, leave the state open to risk.

House Floor Amendment 3 guts the bill entirely. Expanding the exemption to include Class B and C drug crimes undermines the purpose of this legislation and puts lives at risk.

People may know I served as a law enforcement officer in Louisville, and this gives me a specific perspective. I understand the danger law enforcement officers face each day. I genuinely believe no knock warrants are dangerous for police officers. I genuinely believe no knock warrants are dangerous for communities. No knock warrants should only be used in the most extreme circumstances.

SB4 is a powerful step toward increasing safety for our commonwealth. These amendments, however, would render it ineffective. I urge lawmakers to vote down Floor Amendments 2 and 3 on SB 4.

Thank you.