

HARTFORD COURANT REVIEW

DEADLY ENCOUNTERS

Police have killed 21 people in Connecticut in the past five years

BY NICHOLAS RONDINONE

Police officers in Connecticut have killed 21 people in the last five years, largely by gunfire, according to a Courant review of use of force investigations.

The death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis has spurred protests across the country against police use of force, particularly against people of color.

Of the 21 use of force deaths in Connecticut over the past five years, 16 of the cases have been resolved by sometimes yearslong investigations by state's attorneys, and five remain open. No officers have been charged with any crimes in connection with the deaths.

Communities have held rallies, pressed for answers and pushed for police departments to fire officers, but many officers involved have returned to duty, often facing little consequence for using deadly force.

The victims have left behind families, some of whom continue

to press on in calling for justice when more people are killed by police in Connecticut.

Here's a look at those deadly encounters:

Jose Soto, shot April 2, by Capital Region Emergency Services Team in Manchester:

Jose Soto, 27, was fatally shot outside his mother's Manchester home after a regional SWAT team was called to assist staff from the Department of Correction attempting to serve a violation of parole warrant. No weapon was found on or near Soto after he was killed, sources have said. His

death remains under investigation by Tolland State's Attorney Matthew Gedansky and the four officers that opened fire were placed on administrative leave. Soto's family said he suffered from PTSD, and his mother told officers when urging they use restraint in arresting her son.

Edward Gendron, shot Jan. 20, by Waterbury police:

Edward Gendron, 57, was shot after a Waterbury police officer, Richard Tompkins III, responded to a welfare check and was confronted by Gendron, who reportedly had a gun. Police said an altercation

took place before Gendron was shot. New Britain State's Attorney Brian Preleski is investigating.

Mubarak Soulemane, shot Jan. 15, by a state trooper in West Haven:

Mubarak Soulemane was shot as many as seven times by Trooper Brian North in West Haven after state police chased a stolen vehicle up I-95 from Norwalk. Police there said the suspected thief was also involved a disturbance at a local AT&T store. Body camera footage showed North firing at Soulemane

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LOCAL PROTESTS OVER POLICE BRUTALITY

A vocal, public outcry



KASSI JACKSON/HARTFORD COURANT

Manchester residents march against police brutality Saturday from Manchester Town Hall to the parking lot of Illing Middle School next to the Manchester Police Department.

In Hartford and Manchester, protesters decry systemic racism, voice outrage as movement for action marches on

BY STEPHEN SINGER AND ELIZA FAWCETT

Peaceful protesters gathered Saturday in Hartford and Manchester to decry racism and police brutality, adding their voices to the continued outpouring of national anger over the death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police. State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden, who grew up in Hartford's North End but attended Manchester public schools, spoke at a demonstration of hundreds near the Manchester Police Department. He wore a shirt commemorating Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black youth lynched in Mississippi in 1955.

"As a black man in America, I've been fighting for a long time," Wooden said, his voice breaking. "We cannot let this just be a moment, but a movement. This cannot just be something we do hashtags about, that we put press releases out about, that politicians like me stand up on stage and express our outrage and pain about. We have to turn this pain and outrage into purpose and opportunity."

He urged the crowd to commit to ending police brutality, dismantling systematic racism and spreading equal economic and educational opportunities.

"My heart aches, but I also see hope," he said.

In Hartford, a crowd of at least 1,000 demonstrators marched from Pope Park to the Capitol, chanting support for Black Lives Matter, the international movement against racism and violence toward people of color.

Across the state, protesters who called out Floyd's name also chanted the name of Breonna Taylor, a black medical worker killed by police in her apartment in Louisville, Ky., and displayed photos of Ahmaud Arbery, a black man who was fatally shot in February while jogging in Brunswick, Ga. Two white men, a father and son, have been charged with murdering Arbery.

Unlike protests in other parts

of the country, gatherings in Connecticut have been peaceful, though dozens were arrested in Waterbury last weekend after they congregated in city streets, blocking traffic, and refused to disperse. Marchers in recent protests have also blocked highways, including I-84 and I-95.

Marcus Gillespie, a Hartford resident, said he joined the city protest to show his support for the national effort that organized marches, rallies and other protests following Floyd's death May 25. Gillespie, 25, recently graduated from Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville,

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GOVERNMENT WATCH

Neighbors escalate legal fight vs. turbine

Neighbors of a proposed 646-foot-tall wind turbine on a northwestern Connecticut hilltop are escalating their legal fight against the project they claim is dangerously close to them and was unlawfully approved by the Connecticut Siting Council in March.

Property owners and a citizens' group filed a formal petition Monday with the council seeking a "declaratory ruling" under which the agency would, in effect, admit it acted illegally in March — when, without a public hearing, it approved a request from BNE Energy to expand its existing wind farm in Colebrook onto an adjacent property.

The petitioners' lawyer expects to lose, but says this is a



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way of getting her clients the full evidentiary hearing they've been denied so far by the siting council.

This hearing, however, would be in front of a state Superior Court judge.

"This petition is the first step in trying to correct the siting council's gross overreach of its authority," said Emily Gian-



JON LENDER/HARTFORD COURANT

One of BNE Energy's two wind turbine towers off Flagg Hill Road in Colebrook.

quinto, the Hartford-based attorney representing two families and the wind-energy activist group FairWindCT.

"It's truly disappointing that my clients have been forced to spend significant amounts of money on legal fees, filing fees and an environmental survey, all to fight a project that should

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ELECTION 2020

Quick ruling assured by judge over order

Suit focuses on petition requirements to get spot on ballot

BY EDMUND H. MAHONY

A federal judge is expected to rule within days on a suit by Democratic outsiders who argue the coronavirus outbreak has created potentially insurmountable obstacles for candidates trying to petition their way onto the November ballot — even after Gov. Ned Lamont issued an emergency pandemic order relaxing restrictive state election laws.

The suit focuses on a Lamont emergency order last month ostensibly intended to help candidates who, in compliance with state election law, found

themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to knock on doors at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to solicit in-person petition signatures from fellow voters.

The suit implies the petitioning process is intentionally onerous and was written as a means for major parties to keep outsiders off the ballot. Lamont's May 12 executive order, the suit claims, may make the petitioning process more difficult. The order amends election law by allowing the photocopying and emailing of petitions and signature forms, but the suit contends that the measures contemplated by the order consume more time and create additional layers of paperwork.

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