

I am honored to be here today with regards to SENATE BILL # 984. I am Karl Eisaman, Mayor of the City of Greensburg. The City of Greensburg Police Department has a full service 24 hour department with 27 Police Officers, 1 canine and we maintain our own Dispatch Center for GBG, South & Southwest Greensburg with a staff of 9 civilians. In addition we have a staff of 2 Administrative Secretaries and 1 Meter Enforcement Officer. Greensburg's population is 15,899. Because we are also the Westmoreland County Seat, daytime population doubles which can at times strain our municipal resources. The police department budget represents approximately 40% of the city's 10 million plus budget.

City of Greensburg Police Department - Statistical Information 2009

Incidents Handled	10,138
Adult Arrests	1,958
Juvenile Arrests	<u>256</u>
Total Arrests	2,214
Traffic Crashes	500
Traffic Moving Violation Issued	2,724
Value of Recovered Property	\$25,664.99

We believe we have one of the finest municipal police forces in Western Pennsylvania. This bill as currently written has little impact if any on our community. Local governments are struggling with budget breaking pension commitments, healthcare and personnel legacy costs. Coupled with additional increased training, equipment and informational technology expenses make maintaining and operating a functional police department difficult for communities.

I am here today to ask you to consider revising your current bill to provide incentives to maintain or implement police forces rather than a bill that may penalize boroughs & townships that do not provide police protection for their citizens. With shrinking budgets and already high local tax burdens we need to find solutions to aid and assist those communities struggling to maintain public safety services.

Without state assistance, we ask ourselves what the alternative is; fewer or drastically reduced municipal police services throughout the state requiring State Police coverage or sweeping legislation requiring mandatory municipal policing services. Neither choice should be acceptable when the safety of our citizenry is concerned.

Municipal policing serves the community in more ways than just criminal and traffic enforcement. Most municipal departments provide a wide spectrum of public services from crime prevention, child car seat installations, traffic and pedestrian safety, seat belt safety, bicycle safety, school resource officers and drug prevention programs to name a few. Mere visibility projects a commitment to public safety. These are all services that the community wants and expects from its public safety departments.

Several legislative considerations might be:

- 1) Redistribute state fine dollars to communities that have police departments.
- 2) Provide statewide healthcare or pension legislation for public safety entities aiding in reducing the cost to local governments.
- 3) Increase fine fee to tickets such as the \$10.00 fee added to state summary traffic citations to offset hiring and training costs for the Pennsylvania State Police. I believe in the past, fees have been added for District Courts and Counties. But no fees or charges have ever been added for municipalities to aid and assist in maintaining local policing services.
- 4) Revise fine percentage distribution on local tickets. One area to consider is all summary traffic fines within a jurisdiction are returned to that jurisdiction without the 50% split with the state of Pennsylvania. Local jurisdictions are burdened with enforcement and with the current 50% split on the traffic offense fines normally fail to cover the officer's overtime court expense. Municipalities like Greensburg fail to even recover the costs associated with traffic enforcement.
- 5) Legislation that would aid those communities that maintain their own police dispatch centers.
- 6) Continue to fund state mandated programs. In the 2009/10 state budget, MPOETC funds were cut for in service police training which will cost the city an additional \$3,000 in 2010. Unfunded regulatory mandates increase operational and training costs. Reconsideration on funding mandates so as to not place additional cost burdens on municipalities.

- 7) Revise arbitration system. Have the losing party absorb the arbitration costs verse being split equally.
- 8) Permit hand held radar verse the ENRAD system or Vascar.
- 9) REGIONALIZATION of COMMUNITIES
- 10) Senate bill 984 (page 2 line 8) only references boroughs & townships. With the current economy should cities not be included to opt in to this bill if it would pass?

Crime has no borders and with neighboring communities failing or unable to provide a constant and proactive police presence creates an additional burden on those struggling with the increased demand on resources and services. My testimony is not to advise communities if they should or should not have primary police protection but if you do choose to provide primary police protection there should be incentives. If we don't look to the future in addressing some of the local police issues, and more communities continue to opt out of providing police protection then the State Police force will have to be increased and at what cost will that be to the State of Pennsylvania and the tax payer?