

Good morning. My name is Robert Schiffbauer. I am here today to speak directly on behalf of the South Union Township Board of Supervisors. I am accompanied by my fellow Township Supervisor, Rick Vernon, who is a former 27 year District Judge. Also, accompanying me today are Jim Means, President of the Fayette County Supervisors Association and a Wharton Township Supervisor, also we have Supervisors Tom Kumor, North Union Township, Joe Petrucci and Tweety Yatsko, Menallen Township, George Bozek, Franklin Township, and A. J. Boni, Perry Township.

This coming Monday our county association of supervisors will be meeting to discuss Senate Bill 984 and other proposed legislation pertaining to public safety. Recommendations will be forthcoming on these pieces of proposed legislation and this information will be forwarded to your committee and provided to our local legislative body.

There are a number of reasons we support Senate Bill 984. First, as you well know, this proposed piece of legislation would provide municipalities without a police force an option to contract with the PA State Police for additional police services. Fortunately this bill is not another unfunded mandate being shoved down our throats. 984 helps give elected officials the discretion to better determine our needs and how to properly and most professionally address those needs in choosing the correct course of action in the area of public safety.

To help identify and address public safety needs, South Union Township has taken a proactive approach by forming a public safety task force. As an experienced township supervisor of 30 years and a participant of the task force, I have no doubt that if enacted into law S.B. 984 could prove to be a viable option to assist us and determine and right course of action.

Another very important component of the bill we are discussing today is that it not only allows municipalities to provide additional state police protection, it guarantees that we will be further served by the best trained and most qualified police officers who would continue to be a direct extension of the most professional law enforcement institution in the United States, I am speaking of the PA State Police.

984 also keeps the supervision and control of these additional police officers directly under the auspices of the local state police barracks commander. This type of command and control structuring will help keep local politics out of police work and help guarantee the integrity of services they provide. Far too many times we hear of the unfortunate stories of locally run police departments being compromised or corrupted by politically motivated pressures.

I want all police activities in my township kept in the hands of those most capable and who are insulated from outside influences that may ultimately compromise the performance of police duties. Simply put, I want what is best for my constituents.

Obviously Senate Bill 984 does not work for everyone, but municipalities like mine it will allow us to increase the level of police protection and guarantee quality service without breaking the bank or placing an undue burden on the backs of our taxpayers. As township supervisors, we work in an atmosphere that is closest to the people, give us the tools to help govern them the best.

In the closing time of my opening remarks, I must ask this committee why are there no new cadets attending the PA State Police Academy and how could the Gaming Commission be

allowed to hatch a preposterous deal where numerous state troopers who are highly trained in the field of criminal law enforcement be assigned to provide security for the casinos in the state of Pennsylvania and ultimately be taken off the streets where they are most needed. This action does not best serve the people of this state. They deserve a more responsible approach and I am implore you to do something about this.

---