

**WISCONSIN CHIEFS OF POLICE  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

July 23, 2002

Chief Richard Myers  
WCPA President  
Appleton Police Department  
222 South Walnut Street  
Appleton, WI 54911

Dear Chief Myers:

The WCPA Legislative Committee was very busy this past year. The committee addressed several issues of state-wide concern which were considered for incorporation into the State's Repair Budget, along with tracking over one hundred and fifty Senate and Assembly Bills which had a direct impact to the law enforcement community. The following is a brief list of the more significant issues that the Legislative Committee tracked on behalf of the WCPA membership.

**Primary Issue Addressed During the State Repair Budget Discussions:**

**Senate Bill 185 - The Arbitration Bill**

This provision relating to disciplinary procedures for certain local law enforcement officers and firefighters would have allowed police officers and firefighters to appeal police and fire commissions disciplinary decisions through arbitration instead of a circuit court review. Our association along with many other organizations and associations throughout the state were successful in convincing Governor McCallum to veto the provision from the budget repair bill. If allowed to become a law, this would have significantly undermined the state's long-standing tradition of relying on a community's citizen commissioners to address fairly disciplinary decisions regarding conduct of police officers and firefighters.

Our association followed this bill from the time it was introduced until the Governor vetoed the provision from the state budget. The bill was passed in the Senate but was never brought to the floor of the Assembly for a vote. We had extensive contact with the Assembly Judiciary committee that had review authority over the bill. The bill was stopped in the Judiciary committee. However, during the conference committee's review of the budget repair bill, it was inserted into the budget by Senate members of the conference committee. It remained in the budget repair bill after passing both houses which moved the bill on to the Governor for action.

I would like to thank everyone who e-mailed, called, wrote letters, convinced others to write letters, or did a combination of all of those things. You made a difference. After the budget passed both houses with this provision included, I sent out a legislative alert to our members and our members responded and made the calls, sent the e-mails, or wrote the letters that made the difference. This is a perfect example of how we can make a difference when we work together and with other organizations that have a common interest in a piece of legislation with our association.

### **Assembly Bill 675 and Senate Bill 357 – Carrying Concealed Weapons**

Both carrying concealed weapons bills progressed the furthest during this session than any of the previous sessions in which the bills were introduced. The Assembly version passed the Assembly by a large margin, while the Senate version was defeated on the floor of the Senate during the waning moments of the regular session. Both primary sponsors of the legislation in the Assembly and the Senate have stated they will re-introduce the legislation early in the 2003-2004 Session.

### **Assembly Bill 362 – Fireworks Legislation**

There were several bills brought forward which would have softened the existing state law as it relates to purchase, possession, and use fireworks in the state. One version, however, would have strengthened current state fireworks' laws, which illustrates the wide range of views on this subject among state legislators. The first provision would have essentially gutted the current state law. This provision would have removed local control from communities to regulate fireworks' sales, use, and possession. Example, the provision removed the authority to seize fireworks that are possessed or used in violation of fireworks statutes or ordinances unless the violation is subject to criminal penalties under state law. None of the bills introduced passed during the session.

The State Legislature recognized the division amongst its members and instructed the Joint Legislative Council to form a Special Committee to review our current fireworks laws. I have been appointed to that committee as a public member. The first scheduled meeting is September 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Assembly Bill 157 – Body Armor Legislation**

The WCPA Legislative Committee sponsored legislation which would prevent a person convicted or adjudicated delinquent for a felony offense from possessing body armor. We labored for three years to get this bill passed, finally on April 22, 2002, the Governor sign the bill into law. Representative John LaFave and I met with the leadership of the Senate on several occasions to ensure its passage.

### **Assembly Bill 110 – Access by law enforcement agencies to photographs taken for driver's licenses and identification cards.**

This bill removes the sunset provision in the current law. The bill was signed into law on December 17, 2001. The bill which did not pass this session was AB167. This bill would have provided access of driver's license photos to Federal Law Enforcement Agencies. Our association supported both of these bills, and they have not met with a great deal of resistance during this session. AB167 simply ran out of time during the session. This bill will be re-introduced in the next session.

### **Assembly Bill 142 – Following Snowplows**

This bill states the operator of any vehicle which is not a snowplow may not follow a snowplow closer than 200 feet upon any highway having a posted speed limit of more than 35 miles per hour. This bill was introduced during the past two sessions. The bill was signed into law on December 17, 2001.

### **Senate Bill 70 – Foreign Diplomats**

This bill is related to requiring law enforcement officers to report traffic violations and accidents involving any foreign diplomat to the local federal department of state. This bill was signed into law on November 30, 2001.

**Senate Bill 10 – Motorist responsibility when approaching certain emergency vehicles.**

This bill is related to motorists approaching certain authorized emergency vehicles, tow trucks, or highway maintenance equipment stopped near a highway. A motorist approaching one of the described vehicles must move their vehicle into a lane that is not nearest the authorized vehicles defined in this provision. If the motorist cannot change lanes, the motorist must slow and proceed in a safe manner. This bill was signed into law on August 17, 2001.

**Senate Bill 38 – Speed limit school crossings.**

This bill is related to the speed limit at certain intersections and other locations marked with school crossing signs. It changes the current law which states when children are present, to when any child is present. This bill was signed into law on April 2, 2002.

Unfortunately, one piece of legislation which we have not been able to convince the legislator to pass during the past two legislative sessions is the primary enforcement seat belt bill. A number of groups have joined us in our support for this legislation, yet it has not moved through the houses. It will be a goal of the legislative committee and the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Coalition to see this initiative pass during the next session.

It has been the pleasure of the Legislative Committee to serve the Board of Directors and our membership during this past year. The members of the Legislative Committee work very hard and take their responsibilities very seriously. The membership should feel very lucky to have such dedicated individuals working on legislative issues on their behalf.

Sincerely,

**Doug Pettit, Chair**  
**WCPA Legislative Committee**