

MURPHY DESMOND^{SC}

L A W Y E R S

MEMORANDUM

To: Wisconsin State Senate

From: M. Alice O'Connor on behalf of the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association.

Re: Joint Finance Committee Budget Items

Date: 26 June 2007

On behalf of the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association (WCPA) representing 357 communities, we seek your support on several items.

Police Discipline Issue: Support the 12-4 Joint Finance Committee (JFC) vote to remove police officers from the non-fiscal, mandatory arbitration proposal as terms of collective bargaining. It should remain out of the budget. Joint Finance Committee members recognized individuals who carry a gun and who can take away an individual's constitutional rights should be held to a higher community standard. The community oversight related to acceptable behavior and the use of force by police officers is part of a century old tradition of Police and Fire Commissions that have been in place since the 1890s. If the system needs improvement, we suggest a more thorough Legislative Council Study Committee. Police chiefs need the ability to remove a rogue officer from the force with appropriate authority that is not undermined under an arbitration system.

Federal Surplus Property Program: Restore the Governor's budget language that added \$365,000 GPR each year of the biennium to offset shrinking federal dollars. Funds cut by the JFC for the federal 1033 surplus property program greatly assist local law enforcement agencies to receive needed training as well as federal surplus property and equipment. Small police agencies in particular rely on the funds from this program to obtain such things as boots, blankets, first aid supplies, body armor and other protective equipment, tools, video cameras, boats, cars, motorcycles, trucks, all terrain vehicles and weapons, office supplies and office equipment. Currently 301 law enforcement agencies seek to participate in 2007. State funding is critical to ensure local law enforcement agencies are equipped to carry out their duties.

One License Plate: We urge you to reject JFC action eliminating the requirement of a front license plate on motor vehicles registered in Wisconsin. An ability to identify vehicles involved in criminal activity is a small price to pay for both public safety and officer safety. The ability for law enforcement officers to observe a license plate number of a vehicle traveling in both directions is essential for officers to be effective in those situations where identification of a vehicle is critical.

Mandatory Safety Belt Law: Wisconsin Chiefs of Police have a longstanding position of support for mandatory safety belt usage because of the unnecessary and tragic loss of lives that police officers witness every day on Wisconsin's highways. Many of these tragic deaths could be prevented if individuals wore seat belts. It is time to buckle up. Improving the usage of safety belts is the single most effective means of saving lives and preventing injuries. Last session, Congress passed legislation that provides economic incentives for states to pass primary enforcement laws; the State of Wisconsin would receive a one time payment of \$15.2 million from the federal government if it adopts primary enforcement. It is also possible Wisconsin could receive additional federal dollars when the program expires in 2009.

We urge your support and consideration for these issues.

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