

Town of Chester
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TITLE: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING GENERAL GOVERNMENT, CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT, REGULATION, PROTECTION, JUDICIAL AND CORRECTIONS.

POSITION: Oppose Sec. 5

INCREASING TOWN PORTION OF RESIDENT TROOPER COST

Increasing the municipal portion of the costs associated with the resident trooper program may cost the state more than the current program. It will certainly reduce safety in the community and increases costs at the local level.

There seems to be an expectation that increasing the town cost will not impact staffing in the resident trooper program. That is not the case. I believe, as a result of much discussion among fellow CEO's that there is a high likelihood that many small towns in Connecticut will eliminate the trooper program all together or reduce the number of Troopers currently contracted to individual towns. This will have one of two results; more troopers returned to the barracks at a 100% cost to the state rather than the current 30% cost, or a reduction in police force which will further compromise safety in the community as well as reduce state revenue through reduced collections on infractions.

Given the budgetary pressures faced at every level of government it is understandable that all options must be considered. However, priorities must be set and competent cost benefit analysis must be conducted. Public safety must rank among the very top priorities of government. The Resident Trooper Program is one of the few examples of successful integration of state and local control. The current high level of service can not be provided as cost effectively by either the state or local government alone.

Conversely, there has been significant discussion this session regarding proposed financial incentives provided by the state to municipalities to regionalize services. There is already a high degree of skepticism among municipal leaders regarding state incentives, given the states propensity to reduce or eliminate them in out years. This resident trooper proposal serves to further support that skepticism.

I strongly urge the committee to reject this section of the legislation. Should the cost increase proposal remain, I would encourage consideration for a provision that allows municipalities a significant share of the revenue generated from the fees collected through infractions written by resident troopers within the boundaries of the community they serve.

In addition to me, the following Chief Elected Officials wish to be recognized as in support of the above opinions:

Richard Cabral	First Selectman	Killingworth
Mark Walter	First Selectman	East Haddam
Tim Griswold	First Selectman	Old Lyme
Laura Francis	First Selectman	Durham
Richard Smith	First Selectman	Deep River
Tony Bondi	First Selectman	Haddam
Tom Marsh	First Selectman	Chester