



## CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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### Testimony Submitted to the Committee on Labor and Public Employees

February 15, 2011

Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

#### We oppose Senate Bill 359, **AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYER NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES REGARDING MANDATORY OVERTIME.**

The bill would forbid an employer to require an employee to work more than eight hours of overtime per pay period without at least twenty-four hours notice.

This requirement could force public-safety organizations to work short-handed, thus jeopardizing the employees and the public.

Consider a small police department whose roster for the day shift includes sufficient officers, but none to spare. Two officers call in sick shortly before the start of the shift; no other officers volunteer to work overtime, no off-duty officers can be reached, and those working the previous shift have worked OT earlier in the week.

The shift would have to work without sufficient staff to fill the patrol cars, to answer emergency calls, to provide back-up for the remaining officers.

The same would apply to fire departments, which may be unable to man apparatus, or to dispatch centers, which wouldn't have enough dispatchers to field 911 calls.

It is not clear how long is meant by "pay period." Nor is it clear whether "more than eight hours of overtime" is limited to mandatory overtime, or is meant to apply if an employee has worked eight hours of *voluntary* overtime in a pay period. The interpretation would affect the severity of the bill.

Many public-safety organizations run shifts longer than eight hours. This bill would effectively prevent them from requiring a single involuntary shift.

Overtime rules are a proper subject for collective bargaining, and many public-safety contracts do address mandatory overtime. But were this bill to become law, it would have a crippling effect on our ability to protect the public.

Absent an exemption for public safety, Connecticut police chiefs must oppose this bill.

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