

**SENATE BILL 813
TESTIMONY OF ERIC BROWN
STAFF ATTORNEY
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF POLICE UNIONS
AFSCME, COUNCIL 15
BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE OF
THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

FEBRUARY 14, 2011

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee, my name is Eric Brown, and I am an attorney and lobbyist with AFSCME Council 15, a labor union representing the interests of more than 4000 police officers in 62 municipal communities throughout Connecticut.

We are opposed to the passage of SB 813 -- AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM USING CIVILIAN VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF STATE AND MUNICIPAL LAWS CONCERNING PARKING FOR PERSONS WITH BLINDNESS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES THAT LIMIT OR IMPAIR THE ABILITY TO WALK.

The bill is fraught with potential for abuses of power, misuse of power, and threats to the public safety.

Police work cannot be performed by any civilian who chooses to enforce the law. Law enforcement work is performed by trained and certified professionals who must complete a demanding course of study and training regiment at the Connecticut POST academy.

Allowing civilians to take on the professional responsibilities reserved to trained and certified police professionals will pose the potential for injury to those civilians who would perform the duties. It will likely increase the need for actual police presence and service should the attempted law enforcement by civilians inflame the anger of those who have violated the law.

Simply put, it is a sound policy of this state that police work is performed by trained and certified police officers. We should not be allowing civilians to take on these grave responsibilities. We are opposed to this bill.

If there is a concern about enforcement of traffic or parking provisions, then additional police officers should be put on the streets to enforce the laws. Short of that, we should not be asking civilian volunteers to take on the important responsibilities of law enforcement in our communities.