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TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
APRIL 15, 2013

Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Committee. I am presenting testimony today in opposition to Section 3 of Senate Bill 291, *An Act Concerning Procedures for Determining the Potential Disqualification of a Judicial Branch Official and Establishing a Process That Allows the Office of the Attorney General to Review Complaints of Wrongdoing by Municipal Police Departments*. This bill, if enacted, would require the Office of the Attorney General to investigate claims or reports of corruption, unethical practices, violation of state laws or regulations, mismanagement, gross waste of funds, abuse of authority or danger to the public safety in any municipal police department. While I certainly support efforts to ensure that local police departments are acting ethically and lawfully, my Office is currently not capable of adequately performing that task on a state-wide basis.

Under current law, the Office of the Attorney General has no authority to investigate municipal matters, supervise local law enforcement officials or prosecute most criminal laws. As a result, my Office currently lacks the requisite expertise to investigate local police departments. We also lack the resources required to investigate the large number of complaints we likely would receive from the scores of municipalities that operate local police departments throughout the State. If the proposal were passed into law, my Office would need to create and staff an entirely new and separate department with a significant number of lawyers, investigators, paralegals and administrative staff to handle such complaints. In the current budget climate, the State is not likely to be able to fund the substantial number of new positions this bill would require. For all of these reasons, I urge the Committee not to report favorably on Section 3 of the bill at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.