



BILL FINCH
Mayor

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TESTIMONY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
TO THE
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 21, 2013

RE: H.B. 6014 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEFENSE WEAPONS

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 6014.

Many of you are aware of my position on gun control and my advocacy for better gun control laws. The City of Bridgeport Police Department has put an emphasis on the use of electronic weapons in order to apprehend suspects or criminals and to prevent fatalities. This directive has helped reduced the number of police related - shootings and ultimately, protect the safety of both suspects and police officers. This success would not be possible without the department's continued emphasis on officer training on the correct usage of electronic weapons.

Before any officer is issued a Taser they must complete a comprehensive eight hour electronic defense weapons training course. In order to pass the course each officer must be Tased for a minimum of five seconds. We implemented this step because we understood the potential dangers of these weapons and we assumed, if our officers felt the effects of the electronic burst they would be more conscious of the impact.

After reviewing the proposed bill with the Bridgeport Police Chief and staff, we realized that our policies nearly mirror the points contained in this bill. However, I believe there is a need for uniform state wide training standards on the use of Tasers, including a policy that requires police departments to track each time a Taser is fired.

I thank you for addressing this issue and for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on this proposal.

Sincere Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Finch". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Bill Finch

Mayor