



UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE
EMPLOYEES UNION

Bethel Police Union

UCOP LOCAL 1
49 Plumtrees Road
Bethel, Connecticut 06801

February 7, 2013

Greetings Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan, Senator Ayala, Representative Verrengia and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee

My name is Detective George J. Bryce, Jr. and I am the President of the Bethel Police Union. On behalf of the Bethel Police Union we would like to voice our SUPPORT of:

Proposed Bill No. 5540 "AN ACT CONCERNING THE ARREST POWER OF SWORN MEMBERS OF LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS"

The Bethel Police Union would like to voice their support of Proposed Bill No. 5540 "An Act Concerning the Arrest Power of Sworn Member of Local Police Departments". Connecticut General Statute 54-1f predates the year 1950 and its legislative history shows no significant changes in the law to deal with emerging issues facing the law enforcement community. Since the codification of C.G.S. 54-1f the landscape of law enforcement has changed from dealing with issues and suspects that exist in the vacuum of an agencies jurisdiction. Moving forward from the 1950's the law enforcement community has dealt with the issues of mandated arrests in domestic violence cases, the advent of the internet, and investigations that regularly lead investigators outside of their respective precincts.

Laws are meant to protect the public and to provide a framework for how our government will function to that end. In order to adequately address the issues facing victims of crimes, law enforcement officers need laws that authorize them to act in a manner that helps victims of crimes. When a crime is being committed against a member of the public and they see a police officer, they do not look at a patch or the name on a car door, they simply see an officer and expect that they will receive aid. They do not care nor know whether the crime being committed against them is a felony or misdemeanor. All they know is that they need help and they rightfully expect that a police officer will help them. C.G.S. 54-1f leaves law enforcement officers to ultimately turn a blind "eye" to misdemeanor crimes they witness outside of their precincts thereby adding to the victimization of those in need.

The bill is a well overdue response to the evolving issues that face the law enforcement community. Opposition to this bill on the issues of liability exposure, worker's compensation, and operational issues seem extremely misguided. Allowing this bill to pass would add no more to these concerns than making a felony arrest out of precinct, serving a misdemeanor Failure to Appear (FTA) warrant or any other misdemeanor warrant outside of one's respective precinct as is being done already.



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The reality is that the misdemeanor and felony laws that we enforce are the laws of the State of Connecticut. The only difference between a felony and a misdemeanor by definition is the length of the sentence attached to the offense. As such, it seems highly impracticable, illogical, if not unreasonable to tie the hands of law enforcement officers from assisting the public and effecting arrests on the basis of the severity of the punishment for the crime being committed.

In summary, the Bethel Police Union stands in full support of this bill. We believe that the bill will allow officers to promptly address domestic violence situations and many other crimes before they escalate to a felony level. This bill would lessen the liability of officers for failure to act, and it will cause no further strain on operational issues as the same standards that apply to out of precinct felony arrests would be the same standards and procedures for handling a misdemeanor arrest out of precinct. More importantly, this bill will allow us to protect all of the citizens in the State of Connecticut when any crime is being committed against them regardless of where that crime occurs and which law enforcement officer is witnessing it. We thank the committee for your consideration in this matter and we are more than willing to assist the committee in any way.

BETHEL POLICE UNION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "George J. Bryce, Jr.", is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Detective George J. Bryce, Jr. - President