



TOWN OF EAST GRANBY

INCORPORATED 1858

EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT 06026

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February 28, 2014

Senator Joan Hartley, Co-Chair of the Public Safety & Security Committee
Representative Stephen Dargan, Co-Chair
Senator Andres Ayala, Vice Chair
Representative Joe Verrengia, Vice Chair
Senator Anthony Guglielmo, Ranking Member
Representative Janice Giegler, Ranking Member

Testimony on HB5391 – Overtime & Fringe Benefits of Resident State Troopers

Dear Senator Hartley and Members of the Public Safety & Security Committee;

I am asking for your support of HB5391. Reducing net Resident Trooper overtime costs for towns from the current 100% charge to 70% is significant for small towns such as East Granby. Our last quarterly bill from the State Police for overtime was \$14,962 for the Troopers; \$447 for Workmen's Comp and \$12,099 for Fringe Benefits Recovery for a three month total of \$27,508. As you can see, Fringe Benefits cost the Town nearly as much as the cost of the Trooper coverage!

In the above example, the proposed 70% rate would reduce East Granby's quarterly cost of fringe benefits to \$8468 or a savings of \$3631. This translates to a reduction in costs of around \$15,000 annually or 7% of the entire annual cost of East Granby's Resident State Trooper Program. Additionally, the 70% number is consistent with the current percent that we pay for regular costs of the Trooper program.

I am a firm believer in the Resident Trooper Program but escalating costs will soon make us consider reducing our current complement of two troopers to one trooper and fill the spot with a town officer. There are tangible benefits to keeping two troopers but it's getting more and more difficult to maintain unless Resident Trooper Program total costs are kept under control.

Please note:

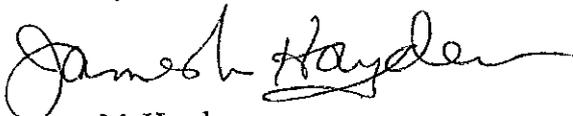
- With increasing costs, our budget may not be able to support 100% replacement coverage of shift vacancies. If this was the case, East Granby would have to rely on the State Patrol Trooper who covers a vast amount of highway north of Hartford all the way to the Massachusetts line. The geography that the Patrol Trooper covers includes several state facilities and six prisons.

- Program and coverage decisions driven by increasing costs will add to emergency response times here in East Granby. Response times can also be impacted if our resident trooper has to leave town to cover an emergency in another resident trooper town or on the highway and then return for a service call in East Granby.
- Reducing overtime costs will allow us to maintain staffing levels so that our officers are minutes away from schools, senior citizen housing and businesses in case of emergencies.
- In the current month we have had nine "weather events" and additional coverage is added during snow storms to keep travelers and our residents safe. Less expensive overtime costs will help us get through the difficult times and not sacrifice public safety.

East Granby is proud of the high quality service provided by the Resident Trooper Program including the supervision of our local police officers. I consider the Resident Trooper Program to be a valued and important program. As a "customer" of the State Police we want to remain partners in creating safe communities but overtime costs are impacting our ability to maintain and enhance our public safety efforts.

From a practical perspective, resident trooper towns offset millions of dollars of cost for the State of Connecticut. It would be unfortunate if rising costs forced the towns to reduce their number of resident troopers and then placed the full expense burden of those troopers back onto the state government and the state budget. Thank you for your support of this important bill.

Sincerely,



James M. Hayden
First Selectman