

Gaetano, Carolyn

From: Besthoff, Len (NBCUniversal) <Len.Besthoff@nbcuni.com>
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To: GAETestimony
Subject: Testimony appearing February 13, 2015

To the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

I support Bill No. 6750, An Act Expanding the Requirement for Disclosure of Arrest Records During a Pending Prosecution Under the Freedom of Information Act. The decision by the State Supreme Court this summer, while correct perhaps in its strict interpretation of current statutes, puts a roadblock in front of our daily work in informing residents of what's going on in their communities. In 2015, with our society well into the Internet Age, common sense dictates government, especially public safety, should be more transparent than ever. We were making progress as a state. When I returned here in 2002, few law enforcement agencies readily shared daily information. Since then, a number of police departments:

- Post their arrest logs online, in some cases daily
- Post arrest and other community information on Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Send out via email daily arrest logs, to interested journalists, often with detailed information

There are holdouts. The Connecticut State Police, for example, the agency that pushed the case brought before the State Supreme Court, does have an accessible public information officer...but there is no arrest log online or anything reflecting the enormous body of work this agency performs. If you want to read daily arrest information from the Connecticut State Police, you have to go to an individual barracks. If you have the time to do that, the information is scant, not a full picture of what happened.

Pictures are another sore spot with Connecticut State Police. While a majority of law enforcement agencies will share "mug shots", State Police have refused, unless the agency needs to get an alert out. The pushback by Connecticut State Police that resulted in the State Supreme Court decision has already had detrimental effects. Within weeks, Hartford Police, which had for years released mug shots, ceased the practice.

There are fair arguments for being careful in what is released to the public. Those occasions where this has become a problem have been rare in our state. We believe journalists have shown prudence, and that responsibility needs to be reinforced by the Connecticut State Legislature.

Thank you,

Len Besthoff/NBC Connecticut
(860)462-6874
Len.Besthoff@nbcuni.com