



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

365-1A Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109

(860) 757-3909 Fax: (860) 436-6050

Web site: www.cpcanet.org

Testimony to the Public Safety and Security Committee

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By

The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

Good afternoon members of the Public Safety and Security Committee.

The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) opposes **H.B. No. 6970 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY SERVICE PERSONNEL** which essentially requires regionalization of public safety answering points (PSAP's) for municipal PSAP's in 2020.

Currently municipalities are responsible for providing 9-1-1 service to its residents. Most municipalities operate their own PSAP through the police department. Numerous small municipalities have researched PSAP regionalization and found there to be no cost benefit. In most, reduction in staffing levels isn't possible due to the fact that the 9-1-1 operators serve many additional roles within the Department. Monitoring prisoners through CCTV, answering routine calls, coordinating police responses and greeting visitors are only some of the services provided by the 9-1-1 operators.

The current law provides funding to all emergency telecommunication centers. It allows municipalities to choose the most effective way to provide 9-1-1 service to its residents while incentivizing and providing greater funding to regional dispatch centers. The proposed law will not only remove all funding to non-regional PSAP's that serve communities with less than 40,000 people, it will **terminate** their connection to the emergency network. In effect, this bill mandates the regionalism and eliminates a municipality's ability to determine which PSAP structure would work best for their community.

Last year the State Police attempted to consolidate their PSAP services. After a short time they realized that it wasn't cost effective and didn't provide the level of service required for the safety of Troopers and the people they serve. The State Police have reversed much of the consolidation and H.B. No. 5105 would require the Commissioner of DESPP to completely undo the consolidation of dispatch centers within the State Police. Consolidation was tried within a singular agency and failed. Are we expecting a different outcome should consolidation be forced upon multiple municipalities and public safety agencies?

It is our belief that regionalization of PSAP's should be incentive based rather than by outlawing local municipality choice.

Therefore, CPCA encourages the Public Safety and Security Committee to **oppose this bill**.