

February 22, 2015

Connecticut General Assembly
Attention: Transportation Committee
Room 2300
Legislative Office Building
Capitol Avenue,
Hartford, CT

Re: Written Testimony in regards to House Bill 930

Dear Co-Chairs - Senator Andrew Maynard and Representative Antonio Guerrero, and all the honorable members of the Transportation Committee;

I would like to offer the following testimony in regards to House Bill 930. My name is Jeffrey J. Bajek of 62 Old Farm Road, in Terryville, CT. Since 1985, I have served as a certified police officer, pursuant to sections 7-294a to 7-294e. I have maintained my Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification since graduation from the Police Academy in 1986. I served the Town of Plainville for nearly 22 years. I worked in Plainville as a patrol officer, an undercover detective, a DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer, and a firearms instructor. I have also been recognized by the Connecticut General Assembly with a citation for my work in Plainville. Following my career in Plainville, I went on to become a patrol officer for the Connecticut Supreme Court Police Department for nearly 7 years. Presently, I am an Inspector with the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles. I have been with the DMV for just over a year now.

Upon beginning my career as an inspector, I learned that an inspector with DMV is not classified as a "peace officer" under 53a-3(9). Being classified as a "peace officer" allows for certain statutory protections that inspectors would benefit from, with absolutely no costs to the people of Connecticut. Adding inspectors to 53a-3(9) would also simplify a number of statues where special wording has to be added to include DMV inspectors.

In one year as an inspector, I have received the same yearly training that I had received as a Plainville Police Officer and as a Supreme Court Police Officer. In fact, I have received even more specialized training with DMV than I ever did in either of my prior police positions. The training files of every inspector are subject to inspection by Mr. William Klein of POST. The same holds true for police officers across Connecticut. Mr. Klein treats the training records of a DMV inspector the same as he does any police officer which he reviews. The amount of training required and received is exactly the same. There is no difference in the training a DMV inspector receives and a police officer receives!

There has been a question about arrests made by DMV inspectors and a lack of facilities for processing these arrests. DMV inspectors are no different than many peace officers as defined in 53a-3(9). Inspectors within the Division of Criminal Justice, state

marshals, conservation officers, and investigators within office of the State Treasurer are all classified as "peace officers". However, none of these "peace officers" have facilities for processing or detaining arrestees.

As a DMV inspector, our goal is to make the highways of Connecticut safe for citizens. Our mission is to identify vehicles which are being operated in a manner that violates statutes and puts the general public at risk. Inspectors specialize in commercial vehicle enforcement. Inspectors perform traffic stops daily across Connecticut. Stopping a tractor trailer on Interstate 95 in Greenwich, Stamford, Bridgeport, Waterford and Ledyard is something we do daily. We also stop tractor trailers on Interstates 84 and 91 daily as well. These are high risk stops. Over 50% of police line-of-duty deaths happen while officers are stopping vehicles. I would maintain that the risk to an inspector is equal to or even more risky than to local police officers. I can say this as I have served in both capacities.

There are approximately 55 DMV inspectors serving the people of Connecticut. The ladies and gentlemen that make up these 55 positions deserve the protections afforded under 53a-3(9). Myself and fellow inspectors work hard to do what is best to protect the people of Connecticut. There are no reasonable reasons to deny adding DMV inspectors to the classification of peace officer.

I am available to discuss House Bill 930 with any member of the Transportation Committee. I feel strongly that House Bill 930 should be supported by your committee and approved by the full General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey J. Bajek
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