

Testimony before the Judiciary Committee
March 16, 2015
By Patrick Gaynor, President,
AFSCME Council 15, Connecticut Council of Police Unions

Regarding HB 7004 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY SERVICE OF RESTRAINING ORDERS.

AFSCME Council 15, a labor union representing the interests of 3000 police officers in 56 municipal communities throughout Connecticut. The Connecticut Council of Police Unions supports taking additional steps to protect victims of domestic violence but we have concerns about the potential liability and increased workload that HB 7004 would place on Connecticut police officers.

Connecticut officers have taken on additional duties and reporting requirements nearly every year for the eighteen years I have been doing this job. Police are required to file multiple reports for every type of crime, traffic stop, mental health assessment, and motor vehicle accident. There are additional forms for cases involving firearms, juveniles, mentally ill, evidence seizures, witness statements, and a laundry list of other less common matters. Police officers are already doing work that other officials can be doing--serving arrest warrants for probation and juvenile probation officers, evaluating the mentally ill and committing them for an emergency exam, tracking statistics for the Department of Public Health and Department of Transportation in every single motor vehicle accident, and much more.

In short, the cops are spending so much time doing mandated paperwork and duties that other officials can do that very soon they will not have any time to perform the duties that only they can do. Cities and towns are already working with manpower levels that are below what they should be. Our communities cannot afford to hire more police officers to handle the increased responsibility the proposed bill will add to their departments. To add these duties to our police officers would keep them away from their existing duties even longer.

Connecticut Police Officers are committed to protecting victims of domestic violence, assisting victims of domestic violence whenever possible, and enforcing court orders of protection when they are violated. State Marshals are tasked with serving legal paperwork and they have been doing this work for many years. I encourage you to explore ways to improve the current method--using State Marshals to serve temporary restraining orders--and keep police officers out in the community doing their established duties.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patrick Gaynor
President AFSCME Council 15
Connecticut Council of Police Unions

pgaynor@meridenct.gov