

Testimony before the Judiciary Committee  
March 120, 2015  
By Patrick Gaynor, President,  
AFSCME Council 15, Connecticut Council of Police Unions

**RE: Raised Bill 1104 An Act Concerning the Militarization of Law Enforcement Agencies**

I am writing about proposed legislation dealing with protective equipment, protective vehicles and firearms and other weaponry that may be transferred to law enforcement agencies from the Department of Defense. First, I would like to stress that there are no offensive vehicles available to law enforcement from the 1033 Program whatsoever. The vehicles that have been made available are Humvees and MRAPs, both of which are all-terrain, all-wheel drive vehicles. The Humvees have no armor and no weapons onboard. They are very useful in rough terrain, off-road or in dangerous weather conditions, even during the most severe blizzards or hurricanes. The MRAP is an armored vehicle which has no weapons onboard. It features armor and bulletproof glass which protects the occupants from handgun, shotgun and rifle fire. It is very similar to an armored car except for its ability to traverse difficult terrain. SWAT officers use these vehicles as a barrier to protect downed officers or crime victims and get them out of the line of fire so they can be treated by EMS teams. They are also used to deliver SWAT officers safely during standoffs of active shooter situations. A civilian equivalent to the MRAP is the Bearcat Tactical vehicle that many SWAT teams already have and which has saved officer lives around the nation. In April 2009, three Pittsburgh, PA police officers were killed and two were more were seriously injured by a deranged gunman with a rifle. The SWAT team used their Bearcat to approach the house and SWAT officers from rifle fire as the gunman fired indiscriminately with an AK-47. The Bearcat's windshield and armor absorbed multiple rounds, undoubtedly saving the officers inside from fatal injuries.

The term "militarization" was made popular in 2014 when police used similar vehicles during protests that turned violent and destructive. The 1033 Program vehicles have no offensive capabilities--no weapons--yet the media has likened them to tanks or other assault vehicles. The 1033 Program does not provide any tanks or offensive vehicles to police--only defensive or all-terrain vehicles and the vehicles that have been acquired by this program have protected our officers and citizens from gunfire during dangerous situations and allowed officers to help people stranded by flood, heavy snow or hurricanes. There are weapons available to police under the 1033 Program, but they are limited to rifles and shotgun type weapons. Many cities and towns cannot afford to purchase this protective equipment on their own and rely on the 1033 Program to get the tools they need to protect their officers.

Connecticut police officers are put into harrowing, life-threatening situations because they are the first line of defense between ruthless criminals and victims who are in desperate need of assistance. Quite often our patrol officers, who work around the clock and are the first responders for these calls, do not have the equipment or advanced training to protect themselves or others from a serious threat such as a

barricaded gunman or hostage-taker. These situations are unpredictable and volatile and across the country we have seen an increase in these types of crimes. In the United States and around the world we have seen criminal mass murder and acts of terrorism committed by criminals and terrorists with firepower and equipment that was far superior to that of an average patrol officer. There were over 200 such incidents in the United States, and according to the FBI, these incidents are on the rise. One need only look back to the North Hollywood Bank of America shootout to see criminals with heavy body armor and carrying heavy weapons that are nearly unstoppable by officers without specialized equipment. In that incident, officers had to obtain heavier weapons from a gun store to end the gun battle--but only 11 police officers and 7 citizens were injured. In Connecticut we have seen situations where heavily armed perpetrators committed horrific crimes-- Hartford Distributors and Sandy Hook Elementary School are two examples. Our police officers must have the tools they need to end these situations quickly and safely. We cannot expect officers to succeed against criminals who have superior body armor and heavy weapons.

The reporting requirements of the bill are demanding and redundant to use of force reporting that is already required. Every time an officer uses deadly force or a Taser, the use of force is reported to the Police Officer Standards and Training Council. The use of forced entry tools and other techniques is also reported to the courts in police incident reports subsequent to a valid search warrant. To add additional reporting requirements creates an unfunded mandate for cities and towns that are already understaffed. This bill would create additional tracking and reporting requirements that will cost cities and towns thousands of dollars in time. I urge you to continue to allow local law enforcement to access protective equipment for their officers by voting down this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patrick Gaynor  
President  
AFSCME Council 15  
Connecticut Council of Police Unions  
[pgaynor@meridenct.gov](mailto:pgaynor@meridenct.gov)