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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES
Republican Chairman
CONSUMER AFFAIRS
POLICY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Townships/Boroughs in Legislative District # 26

FROM: Rep. Tim Hennessey

DATE: January 27, 2010

SUBJECT: Legislation Using State Police in Local Municipalities

In response to earlier inquiries about HB 1500 (which proposes charging townships without a police force for using the State Police), I've been telling my townships that it hadn't gotten much momentum last year, but that it could resurface any time we faced a budget crunch. Things are starting to stir again, because the Governor recently predicted a \$500 million revenue shortfall by June 30th, even while announcing his intent to add another \$1 billion in spending to the upcoming budget.

At a House Local Government Committee meeting yesterday, the Chairman listed HB 1500, HB 747 and HB 1320 (all of which deal with the issue) for "discussion" but asked members to begin to prepare amendments because he hopes to list one or all of these bills for committee action some time soon.

At the discussion, a lot of committee members voiced concerns. I stated that the "equity" supposedly being sought would be very difficult to find. Townships located close to or hosting a Pennsylvania State Police barracks would see state police cruisers much more frequently than outlying townships. Those remote townships might expect or demand a systematic time allocation report, etc. A lot of people seemed to agree that there would be numerous issues to iron out.

I also asked if the committee staff could contact the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) or the Council of State Governments (CSG) to see if any other states are similar to Pennsylvania in terms of state - regional - county - local police forces, to see if we can get an idea of how they deal with these issues.

Despite the many questions raised, the Chairman still seemed inclined to try to deal with these bills, and at least move them out of his committee. Perhaps he's getting heat from one or more of the bill's sponsors or from his caucus leadership, or perhaps it's just an item he wants "ripe for action" in the upcoming budget talks.

House Bill 747 (Rep. Pallone) and HB 1320 (Rep. Saylor) have thresholds where municipalities without police would not be charged unless their population exceeded 10,000, while HB 1500 would effectively charge any township which did not have its own police force (either individual or regional). House Bill 1320 also added a density component, i.e. a population of more than 160 persons per square mile.

You can access/download these bills at: www.legis.state.pa.us . Since it's likely the bills will be listed for an upcoming (but not yet scheduled meeting) please look these over and let me know how you feel about them.

Thanks.

TH/cat