



SMALL TOWN, BIG BEACH

An Open Letter of Thanks to Illinois Governor J. B. Pritzker

February 19, 2021

Honorable J. B. Pritzker
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor:

Thank You.

For purposes of introduction, my name is Edward Delmore. I was born in E. St. Louis, and graduated from a Belleville High School and Junior College. My undergraduate degree is from Western Illinois University. I earned a Master's Degree from Webster University and I graduated from the FBI National Academy.

For 30 years, I served in Illinois law enforcement, retiring as the chief of police in Fairview Heights. My wife and my bother are both retired Illinois police officers. In 2010 I accepted an offer to become the Chief of Police in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Today I remain in that position.

Even though I moved to Alabama nearly 11 years ago I continue to teach in-service classes to law enforcement officers throughout Illinois. I train officers how to do proactive, constitutional police work, while at the same time, condemning the use of racial profiling and excessive use of force. I have been and continue to be a proponent of, and trainer in the proper use of both in-car camera systems and body-worn devices.

The Illinois General Assembly passed HB 3653 and I suspect you will sign it into law soon. Or perhaps you will just choose to not veto it – allowing it to become law. Whichever is more politically expedient.

I won't repeat them here, but you're a lawyer and you know the many legitimate reasons Illinois law enforcement professionals are opposed to this bill becoming law. Not to mention what has been delayed, but is surely to come – the elimination of appropriate legal protection for those that risk their lives to protect and serve.

Robert Kennedy said, "Every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves. What is equally true is that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on."

By allowing this bill to become law, you will be “insisting” on reactive and not proactive law enforcement.

Many well trained and educated Illinois police officers have begun to apply for positions in my organization. Understand that these are not “rogue cops” or even officers that are eligible for retirement. Instead they are young well educated and well trained professionals that sadly have come to understand that continuing to work in Illinois law enforcement is untenable.

Gulf Shores is an island community, a tourist destination with a warm climate on the Gulf of Mexico. We have miles of beautiful white sand beaches and emerald waters. It’s also a community that expects, in-fact demands, professional law enforcement.

Although they were few before, any concerns I had about finding quality officers to work here are over. The stack of Illinois applicants on my desk is significant – from Rockford to Chicago to Metropolis and just about everywhere in between – including current Troopers with the Illinois State Police. They are looking to leave Illinois because of HB 3653 and severe anti-police sentiment they heard from legislators as the bill was being developed.

Those that can’t leave will retire early – just like two Illinois Chiefs I have talked to this week. While eligible to retire, in reality they are relatively young men and could continue to serve in your state for many more years. But they are done.

Others that remain will back-off. The proactive style of policing that I teach Illinois police officers will cease. You see Governor, good cops have no problem putting themselves on the thin blue line and they don’t want medals and they don’t want recognition. What they do want is to be assured that their bosses and their political leaders have their backs if they are professional and yes, even if they make an honest mistake in the reality of the world in which they work – one that is “tense, uncertain and rapidly unfolding.”

In his book *Stoning the Keepers at the Gate* Lawrence Blum wrote “Society must come to understand that the price they will pay for a more passive police officer is a more aggressive criminal.”

Governor, Illinois has seen this already and in your home town, Chicago and mine, E. St. Louis, where shootings and murders are at record levels.

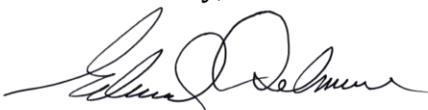
And so now like tens of thousands of your citizens in recent years – many of your police officers will leave.

My peers, police chiefs in Missouri, Indiana, and many other states have noticed too. We now have the ability to hire some of your best and brightest.

And we are.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Delmore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "D".

Edward Delmore
Chief of Police