

HB 136 Testimony

On behalf of PSEA I wish to thank Representative Ramras for introducing HB 136 and working for its passage. HB 136 provides a substantial layer of safety and peace of mind for those making it possible for Alaskans to be and feel safe in their homes and society. Across the nation police officers and their families have fallen victim to retaliatory strikes from criminals previously arrested and prosecuted.

To date, there are no known instances of such violence acted against police officers and/or their families in Alaska; but, this should never be used to justify inaction. In time we will become all too familiar with this trend if we fail to act to pre-empt these attacks. While I could review details of past lower 48 incidents, I wish to focus on personal experience and knowledge while working as an Alaska State Trooper undercover drug investigator in the Mat-Su Valley.

I have served as an Alaska State Trooper for over 18 years and spent 2.5 years investigating drug crimes on the Mat-Su Drug Task Force. While working as a patrol Trooper I took numerous offenders into custody. It was not uncommon to be subjected to repeated and graphic threats of violence against me and my family – particularly my wife. While such threats can be unnerving they pale in comparison to my experience while working on the Mat-Su Drug Task Force.

An investigation of a marijuana grower uncovered an entire ring of illegal drug producers and distributors. What started as a small investigation soon ballooned into a project involving every investigator on the Task Force. Many properties were identified and seized as the investigation culminated. During the searches numerous notes, photos, lists, and information were uncovered revealing sophistication and access to personal information available to these criminals. Found, were lists of investigator's private information including: license plate numbers of privately owned vehicles, office and home telephone numbers, names of spouses and family members, work places of spouses, home addresses and directions, notes describing spouse and family daily activities; and, photographs of private vehicles, residences, and spouses in the community. Naturally, this was very unsettling to every investigator since such information had been gathered without their knowledge. Thoughts of what could have happened had this group of criminals not been stopped were extremely upsetting. It is sure that motivations for gathering and archiving this information were not for purposes beneficial to the investigators, their families, or society.

Those who risk their lives protecting our citizens and insuring relaxed freedom of movement should be able to count on laws that provide some reciprocation. While HB 136 cannot guarantee absolute anonymity and security, it helps remove the ease of its gathering. Please display your support for those who risk all for the safety of you and your families by supporting HB 136. Thank you.

Rob Cox
PSEA President