



A DEPARTMENTAL HISTORY 1808-Present

“In 1863 the governor took control of the City of St. Louis Police Department during the Civil War, now it’s time for the state to give it back.” — Sen. Joe Keaveny



My top priority during the 2010 legislative session is to return control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department back to the people and the City of St. Louis.

The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is currently controlled by the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners. Four of the five commissioners are appointed by the governor and the fifth member is the mayor of St. Louis. This arrangement dates back to the Civil War when tensions between the pro-Union St. Louis officials and pro-Confederate state officials led the governor to take control of the city’s police force.

St. Louis and Kansas City are the only two cities of their size in the nation that have state-controlled police departments.

WHY WE NEED LOCAL CONTROL NOW

State Auditor Susan Montee’s recent 2009 audit underscores the inherent problem with this outdated arrangement — mismanagement and abuse of taxpayer dollars and other abuses that take place when nobody in the department is accountable to voters.

While I applaud the hard work of our city police officers, the structure of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is fundamentally flawed, creating a dysfunctional organization with no direct accountability.

The type of abuses cited in the recent state audit will continue until police department managers are required to answer to local officials and citizens.



SEN. KEAVENY’S PLAN TO RESTORE LOCAL CONTROL

On Dec. 1, 2009, Sen. Keaveny filed a bill in the General Assembly to:

▶ **Allow the city of St. Louis to control its police force without intervention through the passage of an ordinance.**

▶ **Provide for the employment of all current officers and employees at their current salaries, and protect all accrued benefits for current and former employees.**

▶ **Create a newly established municipal police force as soon as Aug. 28, 2010.**

Returning control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department to the City of St. Louis absolutely would NOT alter the current police pension system for members of the department.

— Sen. Joe Keaveny

THE SUMMARY OF SEN. KEAVENY'S SENATE BILL STATES:

"As of August 28, 2010, the City of St. Louis may establish a municipal police force by ordinance. Any such ordinance shall provide for the employment of all current officers and employees at their current salaries in the newly established police force. Such persons shall also be entitled to all accrued benefits, including vacation time, sick leave, and health insurance. All former employees shall also remain eligible for their accrued benefits. The ordinance shall be consistent with any regulation concerning police residency adopted by the Board of Police Commissioners prior to adoption of the ordinance.

After the establishment of a municipal police force, the city may provide by ordinance for the number and ranks of police officers, compensation and benefits of such officers, and appointment, promotion, suspension, demotion, or discharge of police officers, including the police chief.

Immediately upon adopting an ordinance, the city shall file a certified copy with the Secretary of State. The current state statutes concerning the St. Louis police department shall expire upon the effective date of the establishment of a municipal police force by ordinance. The city shall provide notice of the establishment of the ordinance and expiration of such statutes to the Revisor of Statutes.

Any current police pension system for members of the St. Louis police department shall continued to be governed by state statute."

LOCALLY CONTROLLED BOARD WOULD OPERATE UNDER CITY CHARTER

Currently, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is run by a governor-appointed board to whom the police chief is responsible. According to the current City of St. Louis Charter, Section 15, regarding the Department of Public Safety: "The department... shall include...the Division of police. When the city is permitted by law to establish and maintain a police department, such department shall be a division hereunder. The head of said division shall be known as police commissioner. He may be removed, with or without cause, by the director of public safety or by the governor of the state."

WHAT LOCAL CONTROL WOULD MEAN FOR ST. LOUIS CITIZENS

- Improved communication and coordination among ALL City of St. Louis departments.
- Better efficiency and accountability of city government.
- INCREASED SAFETY of citizens through local control of city police.

Senator Joe Keaveny

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