



SELECT BOARD
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Town of Hinsdale

March 10, 2021

Governor Charlie Baker
Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito
Senator Adam Hinds
Representative Smitty Pignatelli
Representative Paul Mark
Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government
Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Committee on Ways and Means (separate groups)
Senate Committee on Reimagining Massachusetts Post-Pandemic Resiliency
Task Force on Emerging Adults in the Criminal Justice System

CC: Larry Parness, Beagle
Boston Globe
Berkshire
Berkshire Edge
MassLive

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Hinsdale Select Board is hugely concerned about recently passed legislation regarding police reform. While we fully support the goal to improve policing throughout the Commonwealth, we are profoundly alarmed by the impact this legislation shall have on our community's police department.

Hinsdale is fortunate to have and be able to afford a 24/7 police presence. We are one of a few smaller Berkshire County towns able to do so, which is only possible due to the mix of dedicated full-time and part-time officers, the financial support from our taxpayers, and the effective management of a responsible and dedicated chief. Yet, this reform program, which appears to be another well-intentioned but unfunded mandate imposed on the municipalities will make it impossible for Hinsdale to sustain our highly-respected police department.

The daunting training requirements proposed and the financial consequences are not only short-term. The first burden is the initial costs to compensate officers for training hours and simultaneously pay others to cover those work-hours. Then, the ongoing need to cover the rising salaries, benefits, and ongoing training requirements to maintain certification is likely to be so burdensome more towns will struggle to maintain viable departments. Frankly, the expectations being placed on small towns' resources is unacceptable, particularly coming on the heels of COVID's devastation to our communities.

This reform package does not affect only Hinsdale; it is an issue for every police department, including all small and rural towns, coastal municipalities, Houses of Correction, and towns with large events and tourist attractions. Therefore, we implore you and your colleagues to reconsider the *crushing* financial demands of this reform bill so that our police department can continue to serve and protect its citizens.

Most sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Richard Scialabba in blue ink.

Richard Scialabba
Chair, Select Board

Handwritten signature of Vivian Mason in blue ink.

Vivian Mason
Select Board

Handwritten signature of Ray Bolduc in blue ink.

Ray Bolduc
Select Board