

Council President Clarke, Sirs and Madams. Good evening. My name is Vincent Benvenuto. I have been employed with the Hartford Police for 8 years. I am currently a Sgt., a union representative, and have been a law enforcement officer for almost 30 years.

In 2010, HPD settled our contract with the city. Prior to this settlement, in my tenure, HPD lost 30 members not vested to other CT depts. And had another 30 on the "on deck" circle to leave. Through fair negotiations, HPD became a very competitive department to work for. We did not lose any members to other departments, and now have laterals working in Hartford. This was accomplished when the Union negotiated millions of dollars benefiting the city, as well as decent pay and benefits to our members.

Currently, 49 members are reaching retirement in 2016, and we have approximately another 30 members that can leave at any time. HPD is in no way prepared to handle this exodus. I am pretty sure Mayor Bronin isn't going to strap on a gun belt and patrol his city. I implore this council, no I beg this council, to vote against this resolution. There are another 50 to 75 members that are 20 year members that can take an early buyout with minimal penalty, and over 100 members that can take a vested retirement.

I would pose this question to the council. If we are nowhere near bankruptcy based upon our credit rating, and our members will certainly lose benefits, what would the incentive be to stay and police the city? Does the governor have the funds to pay the State Police or National Guard to patrol the city? He does not. These are the unintended consequences of this legislation. Hartford will lose the best of the best CT has to offer, and there will be no one willing to take this job.

I assure this council that the present and future leadership of this union will work diligently towards solutions to keep OUR city fiscally sound. Hartford possesses vast potential to become a vibrant city. The Hartford Police work hard every day to ensure the safety of the people of the city and hope to make it a better place for all. Hartford's success can only benefit the labor force in our city. Please let us work together and solve the problems. Thank you.

Sgt. Vincent Benvenuto