

Anti-Ticket Quota Clears IL Senate

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By Tobias Wall

Legislation preventing the use of ticket quotas by state, county and municipal police departments overwhelmingly cleared the Senate Thursday.

Under Senate Bill 3411, police departments would be prohibited from requiring officers to issue specific numbers of traffic citations within specific periods of time. Departments would not be allowed to evaluate officer performance based on the number of citations they issue.

The bill states that departments could still use officer contacts — any instance where an officer makes contact with someone — as an evaluative tool.

Because the proposal would change certain home-rule powers, the Illinois Constitution requires passage by a three-fifths majority, or 36 votes in the Senate.

Democratic Sen. Andy Manar of Bunker Hill piloted the measure that sailed through the Senate by a vote of 57-1.

Republican Sen. Tim Bivins, the lone “no” vote, said the bill would give the small percentage of officers who don’t want to do their jobs incentive to slack off.

Bivins, a former sheriff in Lee County, said that if the bill passes, it would take discretion out of the hands of management and could be the first step toward “circumventing the collective bargaining practice that exists.”

But Manar argued that officers need more discretion, calling the bill “necessary because a quota takes away from a police officer’s ability to use good judgment.”

He also said local governments are often tempted to use law enforcement quota policies as a way to raise revenue.

He said there are other, more useful tools managers can use to evaluate officers, and relying on predetermined criteria “leads to bad policing.”

“Wanting to get more money from motorists is bad policy,” said Sen. Kwame Raoul, D-Chicago. “This is a straightforward measure that makes a lot of sense.”

Sen. Linda Holmes, D-Aurora, questioned whether a law against quotas would put state and federal grants to local departments in jeopardy, but Manar said language in the bill assures that would not happen.

Holmes then expressed her support, calling quota systems “a very outdated way to do business.” Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Belleville, is expected to take up the bill in the House.