

Mount Prospect Police Department

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Cook County Board of Commissioners
118 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my concerns over potential budget cuts to the State's Attorney's Office (SAO). The Village of Mount Prospect provides police, fire, and EMS services to our community. Law enforcement in our community remains vital, especially in light of escalating violent crime in the greater Chicagoland area. Much of this crime has spread to the outreaches of Cook County. Partnerships with other law enforcement agencies and the SAO, ensures our ability to combat crime and prosecute criminals.

Crime and violence are serious issues for the residents of Cook County. A large number of cases are misdemeanor cases and the Third Municipal District is now down to one assistant state's attorney per misdemeanor courtroom. In recent years, the SAO has greatly reduced the number of State's Attorneys on staff, which has lessened their ability to effectively review and prosecute cases. In fact, prosecution of certain misdemeanor traffic offenses have been transferred to local prosecutors and any further staff reductions will only exacerbate this problem. The SAO is a crucial piece of the criminal justice system. Additionally, having only one assistant state's attorney per courtroom results in police officers remaining in court longer as the state's attorney must find time to talk to the officer about their case and/or prepare the officer for a motion or trial while that state's attorney is running the court call and speaking with victims, civilian witnesses and defense attorneys. Further cuts to the SAO budget will have a direct and negative impact on law enforcement in Cook County, and it will severely diminish our residents' safety.

The Felony Review Unit is already understaffed which means longer wait times for an assistant state's attorney to come to the police department to review the case and determine whether the felony charge should be approved. These lengthy delays can result in lack of cooperation from victims and witnesses who do not or cannot remain at a police department for hours for an assistant state's attorney to interview them. In all cases, these lengthy wait times can result in officers being tied up at the police department, and therefore, off the streets, as well as incur higher overtime costs to our department.

Understaffing the felony courtrooms would have a severe impact on the successful prosecution of felony cases. Fewer felony assistant state's attorneys would mean less time spent preparing violent crimes, including sex offenses and armed robberies, for motions and trials. As responsible public servants, we must do all we can to stop the violence and hold criminals accountable.

The Third District has many complex financial cases, including identify theft and credit card fraud, which are labor intensive to investigate and prosecute. Fewer felony assistant state's attorneys would mean that these cases would not receive the attention needed to obtain a guilty verdict.

Please reconsider any cuts to the State's Attorney's Office as it would have a negative impact on law enforcement in Cook County, and our residents safety will be severely diminished.

Sincerely,



Michael Eterno
Acting Chief of Police

ME:dr