

KEUERLEBER

Pennsylvania's counties are facing two major problems -- growing budgets and crime.

Many of Pennsylvania's counties are new homes to criminals forced out of New York City by accessing the Route 222 corridor. Two of these counties that have been hit the hardest are Berks County and York County.

They are setting up shop in the County seats of York and Reading where resources are stretched so thin it is difficult to maintain safety and order for our residents.

Two years ago during our 2006 budget session, I finally realized most of our General Fund money is being spent on crime after the arrest is made. The areas in County government most effected are the Court of Common Pleas, Adult and Juvenile Probation, Clerk of Courts, Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, 19 District Magistrate Offices, Children & Youth Services, York County Youth Development Center, and the York County Prison.

We estimated of the \$161 million in the 2007 budget that \$127 million was spent on crime.

In 2007 I established a team of individuals, which included Sheriff Rich Keuerleber and myself, to research and develop a strategy to form an action plan to address crime in York County. The County of York can not rely and will not rely on you as House Members to support our local financial and crime problems. We also can not rely on our local police departments who are stretched beyond their limits to solve our budget and crime crisis.



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Almost every day last summer you would pick up a York newspaper and read about another shooting, home invasion, bank robbery, drug bust and just about any other crime imaginable.

In my Crime Report we looked to New York City and former Mayor Rudy Giuliani's success in reducing crime by 70%, closing down prisons, and reducing the budget by \$185 million. He used the broken window theory, more police on the streets and the Guardian Angels.

We looked across the river to Lancaster County and Franklin & Marshall College. The college hired security guards to patrol the neighborhood around their campus to rid the streets of crime, which was a tremendous success. We also invited nationally known Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels, to York last Friday where he addressed elected officials, Chiefs of Police, and community stakeholders.

Mr. Sliwa stated many Pennsylvania cities are now welcoming the establishment of Guardian Angel Chapters in their cities and counties. He stated the criminals are now migrating to smaller areas like York because they know our resources are stretched to combat them.

York County could use security guards like Franklin & Marshall College. York County could also use the services of the Guardian Angels and set up a Chapter. But York County already has within its own jurisdiction a department already involved with law enforcement and the criminal justice system, and that is the York County Sheriff's Department, headed by Sheriff Rich Keuerleber, who is with me here today.

We will use, with or without passage of your House Bill 466, this group of trained Deputies to form our Criminal Response Unit, along the same lines as our Drug Task Force and our County Quick Response Team (QRT). Allow them to have the power of Pennsylvania Police Departments.

In the last month I had a breakfast meeting with our County Police Chief's Executive Committee and after an hour of laying out my plan, they were asking how they could help. Several weeks later I stood in front of all of York County's Police Chiefs and made my case. They now believe we are not creating a County-wide Police Department. They now know we are only trying to help them drive crime out of our city and our county. This is a financial problem and a safety problem wrapped in one.

Please pass House Bill Number 466 so your Pennsylvania Counties can receive the much needed help to drive crime out of Pennsylvania.