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Reference: Senate Bill 554

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Kent A. Shuebrook: biographical data

- Thirty-three+ years as a police officer. (1977-present)
- Chief of Police for Amity Township Police Department (February 2009-present)
- Twenty years in a supervisory capacity (Sergeant/Lieutenant).
- Masters Degree in Administrative Science. Fairleigh Dickinson University.

I am Chief Kent Shuebrook. I have been a police officer for over thirty-three years; thirty-two with the Toms River Township Police Department, Toms River, NJ. I have been the Chief of Police for Amity Township Police Department, Berks County for eighteen months. Born and raised in Delaware County, I knew at age sixteen that only the Pennsylvania State Police were permitted to use radar for the enforcement of speed laws. Forty-seven years later, that is still the case in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Traffic safety is about the three EEs: engineering, education and enforcement. The two areas over which my police department has some control are education and enforcement. My appearance here today is to focus on enforcement, specifically the violation of the speed law. The statistics related to traffic crashes, traffic crash fatalities and speed as a major contributing factor in all of those events, are inescapable. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data from 2008 shows that 1,468 people died in traffic crashes in the Commonwealth. 718 (48%) of those deaths were speed-related (NHTSA, Traffic Safety Facts Pennsylvania, Traffic Safety Performance, 2008). In the five year period 2004 to 2008, there were 7,590 fatalities in Pennsylvania. 3,594 (47%) of those deaths were speed related (NHTSA, Traffic Safety Facts Pennsylvania, Fatalities by Crash Type, 2008). Of the 125,327 reportable crashes in 2008 in Pennsylvania, 34,716 were speed related (PENNDOT, 2009, pg 8). Can there be any question that speeding on the roadways of the Commonwealth must be addressed. The loss of life, serious bodily injuries (3,831 in 2008) and the emotional and economic toll on our citizens is not acceptable (PENNDOT, 2009, pg 7) .

The fact that the municipal police officers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are prohibited from using the most accurate, reliable, and safe instruments to address this issue is egregious. The only state out of fifty that prohibits the use of radar by municipal law enforcement is Pennsylvania. Frankly, I do not understand. I have heard some of the

arguments, and I can only respond by saying that most are specious or hollow, but those that are reasonable can be addressed by specific legislative language, such as that contained in Senate Bill #554. There are no sound arguments to continue the denial of the use of up-to-date technology to make our roads safer.

The current timing devices used by municipal police are Tracker, VASCAR and ENRADD. The most serious problem with each of those is that somewhere in their deployment, it is necessary for an officer to be in harm's way. Tracker needs lines painted across the roadway. Every time ENRADD is used requires that an officer actually place herself in the travel portion of the road to properly align the device. There is also the element of human participation in the equation. With tracker an officer must manipulate a switch – thus the question of reaction time – thereby accuracy can be disputed. ENRADD, while eliminating the human part of the equation for a speed reading, has mechanical parts that require a constant monitoring to maintain accurate readings. Finally, all of the aforementioned instruments severely restrict the locations where enforcement can take place.

One of the most frequent complaints I have taken in my twenty-two years in supervisory capacities, comes from residential neighborhoods. What was that complaint? Speeding on streets where children might be at risk. The ability to stop a car in a specific distance when a ten year old darts into the road is extremely dependant on the speed of that vehicle. The Motor Vehicle code of Virginia Title 46.2-880 provides tables of speed and stopping distances for automobiles. The table notes that at 25 miles per hour with normal reaction time the total stopping distance for a car is 85 feet. At 35 miles per hour the total stopping distance is 135 feet. At 40 miles per hour the total stopping distance is 164 feet. At 35 miles per hour with an average reaction time of 1.5 seconds, a car will travel 77 feet before the brakes are applied (Virginia Code). To put that in a visual image, if a child runs into the street when the 35 mph speeding car is three car lengths away, the child is struck before the driver can *apply the brakes. The car will continue 58 more feet before coming to rest.* Laws of physics apply. To underscore further the relationship between speed and death in pedestrian/vehicle crashes, I would cite the following research:

“Meta-analysis research conducted for NHTSA made the determination, that higher vehicle speeds are strongly associated with both a greater likelihood of pedestrian crash occurrence and more serious resulting pedestrian injury. It was estimated that only 5 percent of pedestrian would die when struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 miles per hour or less. This compares with fatality rates of 40, 80, and nearly 100 percent for striking speed of 30, 40, and 50 miles per hour or more respectively.” (DOT HS 809 021, pg 1)

The above research concluded with regard to speed reduction in residential neighborhoods the following:

“Comprehensive community-based speed reduction programs, combining public information and education, enforcement, and roadway engineering, are recommended.”  
(pg 1)

The dedicated, conscientious municipal police officers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania do not have the best technological tools available to enable them to accurately, efficiently, effectively and with a high level of mobility to advance the safety of their streets. Please grant the municipal officers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the ability to serve the public to the best of their ability with the best technology: radar and Lidar (Light detection and ranging). Please pass Senate Bill 554.

## References

- DOT HSE 809 021 (October 1999), Final Report. Literature Review on Vehicle Travel Speeds and Pedestrian Injuries. Retrieved August 4, 2010 from the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration database on the World Wide Web: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/research/pub/hs8099012.html>
- NHTSA (2008). Traffic Safety Facts Pennsylvania 2004-2008. Retrieved August 3, 2010 from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration database on the World Wide Web: [http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departement.nrd-30/ncsa/STSI/42\\_PA/2008/42\\_PA\\_2008.htm](http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departement.nrd-30/ncsa/STSI/42_PA/2008/42_PA_2008.htm)
- PENNDOT. drive safe PA. Resource center. Historical Crash Facts and Statistics Book (2008). Retrieved August 3, 2010 from the PENNDOT database on the World Wide Web: <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/Bureaus/pdBHSTE.nsf/InfoFb08?OpenForm>
- Virginia Code: Tables of Speed and Stopping Distances. Retrieved August 3, 2010 from the World Wide Web: [http://www.accidenttech.com/va\\_code.html](http://www.accidenttech.com/va_code.html)