



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus, Communications Department

State Senator Dave Koehler **www.SenatorDaveKoehler.com**

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Koehler acts to protect police officers from hearing loss

Springfield – Earlier today, State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria) passed legislation that will allow police officers who serve on SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) or Tactical Response Teams to possess and use silencers. Medical authorities believe that the use of silencers will reduce hearing loss for these law enforcement professionals.

“Police officers already have a dangerous job that requires them to risk death or disability every day—especially the members of SWAT Teams,” explained Koehler. “During tense situations, they need all their senses intact. Fifteen seconds of hearing loss can be critical in a hostage situation.”

Under existing Illinois law, only federally-licensed arms manufacturers can own silencers, and they cannot sell them within the state. Anyone else possessing a silencer—even a police department—is guilty of a class three felony, punishable by a \$25,000 fine or two-to-five years in prison.

“This bill is a good compromise that helps keep silencers out of the hands of criminals, but allows the men and women who protect our homes and communities to use them to minimize health risks,” Koehler said. “We even limited silencer possession to members of SWAT and Tactical Response Teams, the people who are most likely to discharge their firearms during the course of their work.”

The legislation, House Bill 1708, passed both chambers of the General Assembly unanimously and now goes to the governor for his approval.

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