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A Message From Your PBA VP for Chapters

Privatization Of Law Enforcement Not Just A Corrections Issue Anymore

With the tough budget times, government agencies are looking for more ways that they think they can save money. Some are even mortgaging the future by accepting lower costs now and passing the more costly effects of their actions on to the next generation of department and government leaders.

We have seen where state and possibly county correctional officers may lose their jobs in Arizona after the state decided to sell the prison system to private for-profit corporations. Can you believe it?!?!? State and county correctional officers could lose their jobs at the stroke of the pen. We know it will not save money. This is just a band aid solution for the short term and then the state (read: taxpayer) will really pay for their actions. They are risking public safety for nothing.

I have been saying for some time now to my police and other law enforcement friends that these private for-profit companies are in business for one reason—to make money—and they will not stop at just correctional functions. They will march on to get more and more functions of government: such as law enforcement.

Many did not take my predictions seriously. But let's look at some recent events starting with red-light cameras

at intersections. Run a red-light? Expect a ticket in the mail from your local private red-light company.

Private companies are setting these cameras up to make a profit. They are replacing hard working police officers with a privatized camera. But let's not stop with this example.

Look at the commercial that aired last week during the football playoffs (prime time TV). In the ad, they talked about some great improvements made by a town to improve its police department. The commercial then took you into a room where an officer was watching a series of cameras positioned on the streets. So if you don't believe the idea is out there, you better start thinking again.

A camera can never replace a police officer or correctional officer, nor can a private for-profit company replace a government agency without serious threats to public safety. Some functions of government must be handled by the government to ensure public safety.

Law enforcement and corrections are core functions of government.

The PBA and I will continue to fight against the hazards of privatization of corrections and law enforcement. It is the right thing to do. Again, public safety should never be for sale! ●

"...these private for-profit companies are in business for one reason—to make money—and they will not stop at just correctional functions."

A woman in a grocery store happens upon a grandfather and his poorly behaved 3 year-old grandson. It's obvious to her that Gramps has his hands full with the child screaming for candy in the candy aisle, cookies in the cookie aisle; same for fruit, cereal and soda in their respective aisles.

Meanwhile, Gramps is working his way around, saying in a controlled voice, "Easy, Albert, we won't be long—easy, boy." Another outburst, and she hears Gramps calmly say, "It's okay, Albert, just a couple more minutes and we'll be out of here. Hang in here boy."

At the checkout, the little terror is throwing items out of the cart, and Gramps again in a controlled voice is says, "Albert, Albert, relax buddy, don't get upset. We'll be home in five minutes; stay cool, Albert."

Very impressed, the woman goes outside where Gramps is loading his groceries and the boy into the car.

"You know, sir, it's none of my business, but you were amazing in there. I don't know how you did it. That whole time, you kept your composure, and no matter how loud and disruptive he got, you just calmly kept saying things would be okay. Albert is very lucky to have you as his grandpa."

"Thanks, lady," said Gramps, "But, I'm Albert—the little brat's name is Steve. I'm going to beat the daylights out of him when I get him home."

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