



For Immediate Release  
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Contact:  
[info@awakeIL.com](mailto:info@awakeIL.com)

## **Awake Illinois Launches Statewide Grassroots Lobby Campaign Against SB2820**

Naperville, IL — Retired Riverside Police Chief Tom Weitzel, Fellow of Law Enforcement with Awake Illinois, today strongly urged all Illinoisans to stand together in defense of public safety and reject SB2820. This legislation introduced by State Senator Laura Fine (D-Glenview) would prohibit qualified former ICE agents from serving as police officers across our state.

“This is not the time to turn away experienced, highly trained federal law enforcement professionals who are ready and willing to protect Illinois communities,” said Chief Weitzel. “At a moment when every city, suburb, and rural county is struggling with officer shortages and rising crime concerns, we should be opening doors to qualified candidates — not slamming them shut. SB2820 sends the wrong message to our dedicated officers and to the families who rely on them every day.”

“All Illinois families, whether urban or rural residents, deserve safe streets and officers deserve respect and support,” Weitzel continued. “Lawmakers should be working to strengthen our ability to recruit, retain, and deploy the best possible protectors of our communities, not creating new barriers that make it harder to do so. When we treat law enforcement as adversaries, it is everyday Illinoisans who ultimately pay the price in reduced safety and diminished trust.”

In response, **Awake Illinois is launching a statewide grassroots lobbying campaign** to mobilize residents, community leaders, law enforcement professionals, and concerned citizens to actively oppose SB2820 and demand policies that truly support public safety. The webpage dedicated to this effort is [www.awakeIL.com/fight](http://www.awakeIL.com/fight).

“Awake Illinois has proven time and again that when everyday Illinoisans come together in respectful, determined advocacy, we can drive real change and hold lawmakers accountable,” said Shannon Adcock, Founder and President of Awake Illinois. “Our grassroots efforts have mobilized thousands across the state to successfully challenge overreaching policies, protect our communities, and empower citizens to fight for safer streets and stronger law enforcement. This campaign against SB2820 will be no different. We will not back down until this harmful bill is defeated.”

As Fellow of Law Enforcement with Awake Illinois, Weitzel called on all Illinoisans to join this effort and make their voices heard immediately. “Illinois deserves policies that build stronger, safer communities for everyone — not legislation that further depletes our ranks and demoralizes the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to keep us safe,” he said. “We urge Senator Fine and the General Assembly to withdraw SB2820 immediately and instead focus on real solutions that support law enforcement and protect all Illinois families.”

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### **About Chief Tom Weitzel**

Tom Weitzel served 37 years in law enforcement, including 13 years as Chief of Police in Riverside, Illinois. He is a respected national law enforcement commentator and serves as the Fellow of Law Enforcement with Awake Illinois, offering expert analysis on crime trends, officer safety, and public safety policy.

### **About Awake Illinois**

Awake Illinois is dedicated to promoting public safety, supporting law enforcement, and advocating for policies that protect Illinois communities and families through powerful grassroots mobilization and civic engagement. Founded in 2021, the organization has built a statewide network empowering thousands of citizens to advocate effectively for positive change.