

SAFE-T ACT FORUM TAKE-AWAYS

Political candidates met with voters in Bloomington on October 27th to talk about the [un]SAFE-T Act. Presenting were Tom DeVore, Republican candidate for Illinois Attorney General and State Rep. Dan Caulkins. Providing comments were State Senate candidate Desi Anderson, State Rep. candidate Scott Preston, and David Blumenshine representing Governor candidate Darren Bailey. More than 50 voters were in the audience.

The 90-minute program dealt primarily with the history of the SAFE-T Act and the consequences of its enactment on January 1, 2023. Questions were also taken from the audience. Here are some key take-aways from the Forum:

1. This bill, a product of radical left-wing ideologues, will result in unmitigated disaster for Illinois. Chicago (Cook County), LA, and NYC have been reeling under similar “no bond” policies for the past two years, and NYC recently repealed its initiative because criminals have taken over the streets in the national’s largest city.
2. The Act is based on a false sense of compassion for those who commit crime. It is based on the progressive belief that ours is fundamentally a racist nation and flawed to its core. There is no consideration for the victims of crime and puts them (indeed all of us) in continuing danger.
3. The Act permits bond (bail) to be set for only seven categories of crime. Crimes not specifically listed in section 6.1 of the Act require “recognizance bonds” (no cash bail). State attorneys are not even permitted to appeal to the judge to hold a suspect regardless of the heinous nature of the crime.
4. This Act will have devastating effects on law enforcement recruitment and retention. One area policing district has noted that 15% of its current mid-career officers will be quitting after the first of the year because they will not be permitted to do their work. People they arrest will, in the main, be back out on the streets within 48 hours. Jail will have a revolving door.
5. The Act will have a major negative impact on judges and other legal authorities because anyone who has been arrested for suspicion of crime must have a detention hearing within 48 hours. This will require judges, police officers, and other legal authorities to be on call 24/7 so a suspect’s rights are not infringed.
6. Those who are arrested and released on personal recognizance bonds cannot be tracked down and re-arrested for skipping out on their court dates until they have been served with a notice and missed a second court appearance. A warrant for their arrest will then be issued but there are no resources available to track these people down and arrest them. And if they flee the state, they are beyond our jurisdiction. Drug cartels will really come to love the state of Illinois.
7. The Act also opens up police officers to anonymous accusations that can have a chilling effect on their performance and careers.

Responsibility for the Act rests entirely on the shoulders of Democrats. This was a Democrat initiative passed in a party-line vote in the middle of the night during a lame duck session of the state legislature in 2020. As Rep. Caulkins mentioned, “This is the worst form of government in which there is no accountability.”

The Illinois Supreme Court saw the bill was so convoluted, unworkable, and egregious, that they delayed its implementation for two years – until 2023 – in the hope that this terrible Act would be reconsidered and fixed. It was not despite pleas from law enforcement, the judiciary, and county clerks.

100 of 102 state attorneys have gone on record as opposing this Act, and 60 counties have sued the Governor to stop implementation of this impending fiasco. As DeVore noted, “There is no way to fix this Act; it must be invalidated.”

So, what can we do about this? We must hold soft-on-crime Democrats accountable for this terrible of affairs. Too often we as voters “fall asleep at the wheel” and do not supervise those are said to represent our best interests. The best we can do now is to vote in Republicans who will repeal the [un]SAFE-T Act before it is too late. If we don’t, Chicago’s problems will become our own.