



# Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

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# LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

The Patriot-News ©

## Lancaster senator's bill could impose response costs on protesters convicted of crimes

By Charles Thompson August 21, 2017

The Patriot News reports of a new bill introduced by Lancaster PA State Senator Scott Martin who wants to make certain that one group's exercise of free speech rights don't become an exercise in future tax increases for everybody who lives where the bullhorns were used.

State Sen. Scott Martin's bill was introduced in the aftermath of the deadly Aug. 12 riots in the streets of Charlottesville, Va. The article states that Martin noted in a preface to his bill that North Dakota protests racked up more than 330,000 hours of emergency responder support, at a cost of \$38.2 million to state and local taxpayers.

Seven hundred and sixty-one persons were arrested, the bill notes, the vast majority of them from out of state.

Could something like that happen here?

Lancaster, for one, has become a present-day battleground over pipeline construction as gas and oil producers - and their political allies - strive to prime the economic engine that they believe Pennsylvania's deep reserves can be.

Under Martin's proposal, all protesters on any issue would still have the clear right to demonstrate.

But, if they acted up in a way that resulted in criminal misdemeanor or felony convictions, the responding governmental unit involved would be empowered to seek recovery of costs for all necessary first responders.

To read and view entire article go to:

[http://www.pennlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/08/lancaster\\_senators\\_bill\\_could.html](http://www.pennlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/08/lancaster_senators_bill_could.html)

See Martin's press release on this Protester Bill below:

## Martin Introduces Legislation to Shield Taxpayers from Protest Costs

Posted on Aug 17, 2017

HARRISBURG – Senator Scott Martin (R-13) introduced legislation today that would shield taxpayers from the financial burdens of emergency response costs resulting from unlawful activity during protests.

Martin's bill, the Commonwealth Response Cost Reimbursement Act, would hold individuals financially responsible for emergency response costs if they are convicted of a crime during a protest or demonstration. The amount of reimbursement would be determined by the court as part of sentencing, or state and local authorities may petition the court for reimbursement of costs after a conviction.

"My goal has always been to protect the constitutional rights of Pennsylvanians as well as the interests of taxpayers," Martin said. "I think this approach strikes the right balance between these two priorities. It only affects individuals who break the law and cause harm to others or their property, and not the individuals who are simply exercising their rights to free speech and lawful assembly."

The legislation underwent significant changes over the past several months in order to ensure the bill did not infringe upon the First Amendment rights of protestors. The legislation will not impact protest groups or organizers, but will target only those individuals who are convicted of a felony or misdemeanor stemming from a protest event.

Martin hosted a forum for local emergency responders in May featuring officials from areas affected by the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, which created nearly \$40 million in additional costs to state and local taxpayers. Although the potential for similar protests regarding the Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline in Lancaster County was the driving force behind Martin's proposal, the senator emphasized that the bill applies to all kinds of demonstrations and rallies – not just pipeline protests.

"This bill treats every group the same. If you gather for a peaceful, lawful protest or demonstration, then you have absolutely nothing to fear from this legislation," Martin said. "This bill only targets violent and destructive individuals who use these gatherings as an excuse to cause property damage or incite violence. It applies equally to all individuals."

The bill was referred to the Senate State Government Committee for consideration.

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## **Martin is the same senator that co-sponsored PA Senate Bill SB503 "Transparency in Collective Bargaining" This bill would permit the public to sit in on all negotiations**

As legislators who firmly believe that secrecy breeds distrust and transparency is the cornerstone of good government, we believe taxpayers deserve to know and understand the deals that are being made when elected officials negotiate a collective bargaining agreement that will be paid for with their tax dollars.

As we all know, contract negotiations significantly impact the size and expense of government and the services that constituents receive. Unsurprisingly, secret negotiations bring a cloud of doubt and can lead to abuse. We believe increased transparency will not only make public officials more accountable to the citizens they represent but also make union representatives more accountable to their members.

The fact that many of these negotiations result in an increase in taxes is enough reason to provide additional transparency to taxpayers. But many times these negotiations result in strikes, disrupting the lives of children, parents, and all those held hostage while a deal is struck.

Our proposals would bring openness and transparency to state and local decision making by allowing public access to collective bargaining negotiations. As of 2015, a dozen states require full or limited access to collective bargaining sessions of public employees.

Please join us in bringing much needed reform to a process that certainly impacts all Pennsylvanians.

View Transparency in Collective Bargaining bill at: Introduced as [SB503](#)

