

# Beiser legislation increases penalties on crimes against police officers

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**SPRINGFIELD** – In response to an uptick in violence against police officers, state Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton, is sponsoring legislation to categorize crimes against law enforcement as hate crimes.

“According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2016 had the largest number of ambush shooting attacks on police officers in more than two decades,” Beiser said. “Our law enforcement officers are doing everything they can to

keep our families safe and when they have to fear for their own lives, their jobs become much more difficult. As a community, we have a responsibility to support police officers for all that they do for us.”

Currently, prosecutors have discretion in how they charge criminals who target police officers. Beiser’s House Bill 778 would make every crime committed in an attempt to intimidate officers as a hate crime. Under the legislation, any assault, battery, misdemeanor theft, criminal trespassing, vehicle or property damage, disorderly conduct or harassment against a police officer because of their job would automatically be classified as a Class 4 felony.

“It is unacceptable that anyone would target police officers for doing their jobs,” Beiser said. “We owe it to our police officers and their families to hold people accountable for their actions. The attacks law enforcement face every day should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law against any person who targets those who put their lives on the line for our safety.”