

Chief Coles Makes Plea To State Legislators To Increase Penalty For Fleeing And Eluding Cases

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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SOUTH ROXANA - South Roxana Chief of Police Bob Coles has had his share of fleeing and eluding cases in recent months through his vicinity near I-255. He is a proponent of increasing the penalty for these types of cases.



"I would like to ask for support from the community and our state legislators about the fleeing and eluding statute," he said. "Aggravated Fleeing from the police is only a Class 4 felony, but if you put plates from one of your cars to another without registering the vehicle it is a Class 2 felony. So, a Class 4 Felony is less severe than a Class 3, Class 2, or Class 1. As it stands now, someone who flees from police at over 100 mph through your town is considered in the eyes of our law not as severe as someone who puts plates on a vehicle that it does not belong on.

"In my opinion, it is time to quit safeguarding the criminal element who put everyone at risk. The way felony charges work is the higher the number the less severe are the consequences. I spent years trying to bring attention to these ridiculous penalties involved in fleeing and eluding statute. Regardless of what side of the political spectrum you side with, we need a much more balanced effective approach to fighting crime. There is no deterrent from fleeing from the police and putting everyone on the road in danger and the officers at serious risk."

Chief Coles added that Illinois law makes the risk versus reward way too skewed for the criminal in this case.

"If you're a criminal why not try and get away because the consequences of getting caught are more serious than fleeing in the first place," he said. "In the last several years, pursuits have skyrocketed in our communities. The drivers also know the more dangerous they drive and more at risk they present to the community, the less likely police will pursue after them.

"My plea for support is not a pro-police pitch but a question of, if someone committed a crime against one of your family members do you want the officers to watch them drive away to avoid the unnecessary risk or take them into custody and remove the threat from our streets?

"If you are concerned about this law, please find your local state representative, and contact them asking with help by enhancing the penalty for such reckless conduct. We are blessed to have some amazing state reps that work in our area."