

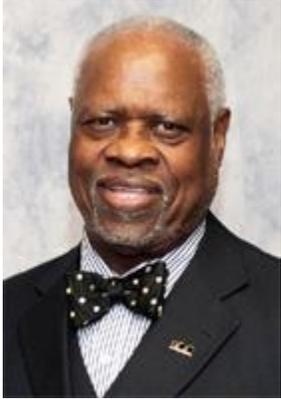
Several County Board Members Take Issue With Controversial Appointment By Prenzler

by Stacey Pace

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EDWARDSVILLE – Several Madison County Board Members and County officials are taking issue with County Board Chairman Kurt Prenzler’s appointment of County Board Member Michael “Doc” Holliday (D-Alton) to the Southwestern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (SILEC).



The controversy surrounds Holliday’s past support of the highly controversial “SAFE-T Act” passed by the Illinois legislature and signed by Governor JB Pritzker in 2021. The bill was widely criticized as weakening law enforcement and for its elimination of cash bail for most offenses.

In the February 17, 2021, County Board meeting, the County Board passed a resolution by a vote of 26-1, urging Governor Pritzker to veto the hastily passed legislation. Holliday spoke out in favor of the SAFE-T Act and was the lone no vote on the resolution. Holliday also opposed a recent resolution passed by the county board condemning the “assault weapons” ban legislation recently signed into law by the governor.

“I think Mr. Holliday is a good man, but he’s not the right person to serve on the SILEC board, based on his past statements,” said County Board Member Mike Babcock (R-Bethalto). “He openly supported the so-called ‘SAFE-T Act’, so it’s unacceptable that Chairman Prenzler would attempt to appoint him.”

County Board Member Stacey Pace (R-Troy) agreed. “There are 26 members of the County Board, so it’s really confusing as to why Mr. Prenzler would choose the one County Board Member who has been least supportive of law enforcement to serve on this commission,” said Pace. “He should be appointing someone who reflects the overall views of the county board, the law enforcement community and the citizens of this county. This appointment clearly falls short of that.”

Madison County Sheriff Jeff Connor (R-Maryville) said that he had made a recommendation to Prenzler for the seat. “I recommended County Board member Terry

Eaker (R-Bethalto), because Eaker is chair of the Public Safety committee and had previously worked for 5 years as an auxiliary police officer,” said Connor.

The controversial SAFE-T Act has been opposed overwhelmingly by law enforcement throughout the state. In 2022, Madison County State’s Attorney Tom Haine (R-Alton) and Madison County Sheriff John Lakin (D-Maryville) filed a bi-partisan lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Act. After being sworn in as Sheriff in December 2022, Connor joined the lawsuit.

The County Board is set to vote on the appointment at Wednesday’s board meeting.