

# Privatization of Police Services

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## Abstract

*In recent years, police agencies have experienced increased demands from all segments of society, as well as a resounding cry of “no more taxes”. As a result, a new management culture has begun to emerge which has caused police agencies across the country to look at how they currently do business, how they can eliminate waste, and how they can become more efficient. Over the years, police agencies have taken on many non-crime related duties which really do not require a sworn police officer to accomplish the task. Now, for reasons of economics, police agencies are beginning to consider shedding these ancillary services. These services would then be performed by private security firms under contract with government agencies or under contract with other private entities such as business districts or neighborhoods who desire these services.*

*Florida’s Amendment 10, also known as the Save Our Homes amendment, limits homestead property valuation increases to 3 percent per year, or the increase in the Consumer Price Index. In Martin County this year that translates to a loss of \$629,000 in tax revenue which will be unavailable to local government including law enforcement. This amendment is similar to California’s Proposition 13, and many of the problems experienced in California will be mirrored here in Florida. Along with population growth comes an increase in the demand for police services. The growing population will bring additional crime as well. The inability to raise additional tax money, coupled with a growing demand for service, will make funding for police agencies very challenging in the future. This could be the impetus needed to get police agencies to consider shedding those non-essential tasks and turning them over to private security firms who can do them more efficiently and more economically.*

*This research project looks at the feasibility of privatizing police services and the resulting impact upon the citizens.*

## Introduction

In order to best understand how the recent trend toward privatization of police work fits in the social framework and evolution of the American criminal justice system, one must first understand the historical antecedents.

In England during the period of Anglo-Saxon dominance, the title of Sheriff first appeared in the reign of C’Nut (1017-1034), but the Sheriff’s duties consisted primarily of judicial and administrative functions. At the Council of Clarendon (1164), Henry II bestowed extensive law enforcement powers and responsibilities upon the Sheriff, which thrust the Sheriff into the midst of the crime problems plaguing England. The Sheriff was expected to make a “biannual tour of his county for the purpose of administering the Oath of Frankpledge to all male citizens of the county” (Bailey, 1989). This oath committed the citizens to obey the law, and assist in the apprehension of lawbreakers. Thus, despite the creation of specific offices in which some law enforcement duties were vested, the medieval English kings continued to rely upon the individual male citizen for maintenance of social order.

“After the English Revolution, and following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, crime in the English countryside dictated continued reliance upon the law abiding

tendency..." (Bailey, 1989) of the average citizens under the eye of the village or parish constable. The rural constables were reputable members of their community who conscientiously pursued their duties in London. These upstanding citizens' responsibility to police their parish or county often was seen as an irritant and was passed off to some lesser person. Eventually, a call for professional, paid, supervised people to carry out the law enforcement job was issued in the late 1700's by William Pitt, the Prime Minister.

While informal, voluntary, and private security systems for providing police services existed before 1829, that year marked the creation by Sir Robert Peel of a paid, public full-time police force in London, and for all intents and purposes, the inception of modern police administration. In 1829 Sir Robert Peel put through Parliament a bill for creation of the London Metro Police. A half-century of debate and discussion, parliamentary inquiries, and the creation of numerous voluntary societies to reform public morals, however, preceded Peel's bill. During these decades, London also relied on fee-for-service police officers while the watch was organized and paid for on a parish-by-parish basis, with consequent wide variability in numbers and effectiveness.

"In the colonial period of America, order maintenance and crime fighting were more individual and communal responsibilities than the purview of a bureaucratic agency" (Hess, 1982). The colonists brought with them such traditional English institutions as elected constables and the night watch. In theory, constables had extensive legal responsibilities and powers, although rarely did their prestige and authority match their legal position. The watch, often made up of reluctant citizens, kept a lookout for fire as well as crime and disorder. In the case of crime "the aggrieved party bore the burden of initiating the processes of apprehension and prosecution" (Bailey, 1989). By the early 19th century, New York had more than 100 persons with police powers, either as elected constables or appointed mayor's marshals. "They spent a majority of their time involved in civil process, although they were available for hire by victims of theft. They made a specialty of returning stolen property in return for a portion of the recovery. Early 19th century police officers were thus fee-for-service professionals rather than salaried bureaucrats" (Hess, 1982).

Within a decade or two after the London Metropolitan Police Force was established, large American cities, including Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, formed paid, full-time police forces, while smaller American cities and towns followed suit later in the 1800's and early 1900's. Although the London Metropolitan Police Force served as the model for American police departments, several important differences developed. For example, American police at first resisted wearing uniforms and were soon carrying firearms. In general, early American police were less successful than their English counterparts in gaining the respect and cooperation of the public. This lack of respect was attributed to many factors including "greater ethnic and social diversity in American communities, the frontier character of much of early America, and most importantly the close ties to partisan politics" (Hess, 1982). It wasn't until the late 1800's and early 1900's when a major reform movement sought to separate politics and police administration, that the police administration was put in the hands of trained professionals.

## History of Private Security in America

The earliest beginnings of “modern security”, the “watch and ward” system in England and later in the United States, involved private citizens sharing, on a rotating basis, responsibility for night security of the town. “Increasing urbanization and the accompanying crime resulted in full-time police departments. Early on came the realization that public law enforcement officers could not possibly meet all the safety requirements in the community. This prompted Alan Pinkerton, in 1855, to establish the first private security company in this country” (Hess, 1982). Pinkerton was initially involved in hunting outlaws, providing railroad security, and other security functions.

The first burglar alarm company was founded by Edwin Holmes in 1858 which was a forerunner of today’s multi-million dollar protection alarm industry. Washington P. Brink was not far behind when he began a truck delivery service in 1859, which evolved into Brink’s Armored Car Company. It is believed that World Wars I and II exerted the most significant impact on the dramatic growth of this industry. Both wars created extensive need for defense plant guards and security. “Many observers contend that the so-called crime wave that had erupted since World War II had exerted even more pronounced influence on the growth of the private security industry” (Bailey, 1989). This “crime wave” prompted business and industry into realizing that the police could not deal with a rising crime rate and protect private concerns. This, more than anything, has resulted in transforming private security from a merely peripheral industry to a dominant one of today.

This paper will examine the issues of privatization of police services from both a private and public perspective, will attempt to determine the continued feasibility of privatization, and whether this privatization of public policing will and/or should expand to provide more than ancillary services.

## Methods

### Procedure

In conducting research for this paper, a review of the literature at the Strozier Library of Florida State University and at the Martin County Public Library uncovered abstracts from many popular non academic publications; Forbes, The Economist, and Common Cause were among magazines which carried articles discussing the growth of the private security industry. Most articles focused on providing neighborhood patrol services. Examples included Manhattan’s Carnegie Hall district and the affluent Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC.

Among the most helpful sources obtained in a request to the National Criminal Justice Research Service for a search of the National Institute of Justice databases were Public Policing - Privately Provided, by Marcia and Jan Chaiken, and Using the Private Sector to Deter Crime, by Morgan O. Reynolds.

A request to the California Department of Justice Commission on Peace Officers Standard and Training Command College for a search of previous projects on police privatization and produced five extensive papers.

Numerous telephone and personal interviews were conducted with professionals in both the public and private sectors including Chief Steve Belcher, Santa Cruz, California, who shared his city’s experience with the use of security guards under contract to patrol city parks and high drug trafficking areas; Pat Cannan, Vice President

of Corporate Relations, Wackenhut, who provided numerous reprints of newspaper articles on the topic as well as his company's experience in the field; William C. Cunningham, President of Hallcrest Systems, Inc., who provided very valuable information on his Hallcrest Reports and what he foresees in the future regarding this topic, and who also put me in contact with Dr. Dennis Johnson for acquiring copies of the two hardcover Hallcrest I and II Reports; Dr. Dennis Johnson, President of Behavioral Analysts and Consultants, who provided two excellent resource books in the way of Hallcrest I and II; Laurel Kelly, C.F.A., Martin County Property Appraiser, who was able to explain the effects of Florida's Amendment 10 and translate that effect into dollars lost; George Murphy, President of Security Virtual, Inc., who was able to share his experience as a corporate security director and the use of proprietary security; William Renfro, President of Policy Analysis Company, Inc., who shared his personal experience of living in the Georgetown neighborhood that had hired a private security firm to walk a foot beat in their area; Chief Joan Waldron, Stuart, Florida, who reviewed my paper and provided valuable suggestions on how to improve it; and Denise Zuidema, Administrator, Sussex Borough, New Jersey, who shared the experiences her town had after eliminating their public police force and hiring a private security firm to patrol the town, discussing the resultant controversy by police unions and the eventual court case which disbanded the private guard patrol.

## Results

Privatization of ancillary police services has existed for many years; however, the privatization of uniformed officer patrol functions has not been considered except for a few specialty cases. Lately, interest in privatization has been piqued in the search for reducing costs, improving performance, and reducing bureaucracy.

Although the nation's overall crime rate is holding relatively steady, with the home burglary rate dropping by almost 18 percent from 1988 to 1992, Americans are spending enormous sums of money, \$65 billion, on private security products and services in 1993, almost double the \$35 billion that the federal, state, and local agencies spent on law enforcement (Common Cause, 1995).

"The shift of police service delivery to the private sector is taking place in basically four ways: 1) default; 2) accommodation and cooperation; 3) enabling legislation; and 4) by contract" (Chaiken, 1987, p. 8). Default transfers occur when the government does not meet a pressing need for law enforcement services, leaving private companies to fill the vacuum. For example, affluent neighborhoods which experience a rash of crime often feel they have to provide more protection than the police can provide. They then contract with a private security for armed security patrol. An example of this was in the Westwood section of Los Angeles. After several drive by shootings and an armed robbery, the neighbors organized to contract with Westec Security for \$85 a month per resident for an armed guard patrol 24 hours a day (Forbes, 1994).

Accommodation and cooperation occurs when the police informally rely on private security personnel to perform tasks they prefer not to do; in return, the public police provides needed services such as responding expeditiously to calls for assistance from the private security personnel. For example, private security companies are providing security and shelters for the homeless in New York City. A

provision of this unpleasant service allows officers to spend their time in police functions, and when fights or other incidents occur at the shelter, they respond expeditiously to those calls (Chaiken, 1987).

Enabling Legislation passed recently in several states allows specific types of private security personnel limited police powers. For example, in some cases, campus police at private colleges and universities and retail security personnel not only have arrest powers in case of theft from their employers, but they can also book an alleged offender and testify in court as the arresting officer (Chaiken, 1987).

Contracts between government agencies and private security companies for a specific task have become so commonplace that they are beginning to blur traditional distinctions between private and public providers. Public police agencies are, in some areas, entering into contracts to provide special or additional police services to private organizations or neighborhoods on a fee basis (Chaiken, 1987).

Only one recent attempt to privatize an entire police force was uncovered in an extensive search of the literature and discussions with primary sources. According to Denise Zuidema (personal communication, March 4, 1996), Borough Administrator of Sussex, New Jersey, their police force was reduced by 50 percent in February 1993 when two of their police officers were indicted by the county prosecutor. Due to financial issues, the Borough decided to abolish their police force. After much research, which included regionalization, the Borough decided the most viable option available, both economically and expediently, was to hire a security firm to patrol the community of 2,600 people. By contracting with the security firm, the Borough realized a savings of more than 52 percent compared to the annual police budget. Although the security guards did not hold true police powers, they were a visible uniformed presence in the community. The security guards were not a police force. They called upon the New Jersey State Police for enforcement action. Ms. Zuidema reported that the security firm was especially helpful in curbing vandalism and re-establishing a rapport with the juvenile community which had been eroded by their police force. Zuidema stated, "There was a lot of involvement with the kids. It was to the point that when they (the security guards) were uptown and they were walking, the kids would run up to them, after getting off the school bus, and latch on to their legs and the guards would walk along with the kids. They were all really fantastic."

According to Ms. Zuidema, New Jersey law does not prohibit public/private partnerships such as they engaged; however, the local police labor organizations rallied together to get New Jersey's Attorney General to challenge the contract. Police labor unions can be expected to provide the most vocal resistance for transferring police support service to the private sectors. Unions like to preside over increases in the number of uniformed officers, not a likely outcome of privatization efforts. Proposed contracts with private companies to provide more civilian employees are sometimes used as another way to cut down the number of "real" police. "According to a spokesman from the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, "Guards from the security company could be potentially involved in a serious crime and they're not trained law enforcement officers" (Hour, 1993). A judge eventually entered an order invalidating the contract and disbanding the security service. The judge stated, "The traditional role of government... has always been to provide for the public safety and that role simply cannot be delegated to a private agency" (Hour, 1993). The judge simultaneously

urged the New Jersey State Police to increase their presence in the community. The borough chose not to appeal the judge's ruling and it now has police service provided by the state police.

According to an article in Forbes magazine, "the private protection business is already doing \$52 billion a year and is growing at 8 percent a year [See figure 1-1].

Figure 1-1 Source: Cunningham, W. C., Strauchs, J. J., & VanMeter, C. W. (1990). Private Security Trends 1970 to 2000 The Hallcrest Report II. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

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The Department of Justice says the private security industry, with some 1.5 million employees, now employs at least two and one half times as many people as public law enforcement" (Forbes, 1994) [see figure 1-2].

Figure 1-2 Source: Cunningham, W. C., Strauchs, J. J., & VanMeter, C. W. (1990). Private Security Trends 1970 to 2000 The Hallcrest Report II. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

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Washington DC's Georgetown neighborhood is an example of a neighborhood which felt abandoned by its police department. Through government default, the neighborhood took over police functions which it delegated to a private security force. For \$160 a year, residents of Georgetown got a security guard who patrols their small area five nights a week.

According to Georgetown resident William Renfro, President of Policy Analysis Company, Inc., a security guard works five nights a week and carries a cellular phone. Residents are able to call the guard as they approach the neighborhood and the guard will meet them at the car and escort them to their door. Residents also call this guard to report suspicious activity, and in turn, if the guard discovers anything suspicious he can contact the police department.

In the elegant Westwood section of Los Angeles one woman organized her entire neighborhood after gunshots, fired by a drive-by gunman, struck her family's vehicle, and several days later an elderly resident on her block was robbed at gunpoint by someone disguised as a delivery boy. This woman walked door to door persuading her neighbors to contract with a security service who would provide 24 hour armed patrol service at a cost of \$85 a month.

What's happening in Westwood is happening in other affluent big city neighborhoods. Unimpressed by the security provided by strapped, undermanned, and frequently demoralized municipal police forces, frustrated citizens are increasingly turning to the private sector for their protection (Forbes, October 1994).

The Santa Cruz, California Police Department has successfully used private security periodically since 1987. Chief of Police Steve Belcher stated the City of Santa Cruz has a contract with a private security firm which provides unarmed security guards for reasonable cost. The contract gives the city right of refusal of any security guard.

Chief Belcher advised that most guards are students at the local community college criminal justice program and as such the guard service is able to provide a higher than expected caliber of employee (S. Belcher, personal communication, February 28, 1996).

Chief Belcher reports that security guards have been used at city parks after intensive investigative efforts by his officers to clean up a park of illicit drug activity. He reported that the uniformed security guard acted as a deterrent factor and kept the parks from being reinfected with the drug activity. The job the guards were doing was one which sworn police officers saw as mundane and undesirable, so the police officers' labor organization had no complaints about the use of these guards, and it was economically a better deal for the City of Santa Cruz to use the less expensive guards.

Belcher also reports that he used two-man security guard teams to work on street corners which had reported uses of high drug activity. He advised that this was usually successful, as the guards provide a uniformed presence and deter illegal activity; however, since these guards are unarmed, it is less successful in hard core areas where the intimidation is strong. Belcher also said that the security guards are used to lock up city parks each night, a task formerly handled by police officers.

Belcher said that overall the use of security guards has been well received by both his officers and the citizens. The officers appreciate no longer having to perform mundane tasks, and the city is able to have these tasks performed by less expensive contract security guard employees, and the citizens have greater peace of mind because of the uniformed presence of the security guards.

According to research by Chaiken and Chaiken (1987), interviews with representatives of private security companies and their government agency clients all yielded the same response concerning the cost of contracts from the private firms. Government administrators cannot and should not expect to be able to save money by hiring private security personnel to carry out tasks that require the intellectual interaction and physical skills of uniformed police officers. The costs of hiring qualified personnel and training them will be nearly equal whether accomplished in the public or the private sector, and savings on fringe benefits in the private sector would only be temporary.

There are concerns about the provision of equal and equitable services because one of the reasons public police departments were formed was to provide police services for people who were not able to pay for them. Privatization is viewed by some as a return to this rejected system of favoritism for the wealthy. Such inequities of service are more likely to occur when security services are privately contracted than when funded through government agencies. The concerns that have been raised, however, should be considered in the process of deciding *at what level* privatization should occur and the preparation of government contracts for private sectors who provide police services. There is also the concern that police services are delivered by sets of personnel with different skills and abilities. Concern may arise that tasks involving the poorer citizens may be allocated to the least skilled private security personnel. Police services in particular are subject to problems of equity since the most financially depressed areas of the community are those most in need of many police services (Chaiken, 1987).

Recognizing that police departments were formed to provide services equitably to all segments of society, some will view privatization as a return to the antiquated system of favoritism for the wealthy. Most police agencies which have considered

privatization are very cognizant of these concerns and are very careful to address them throughout careful contract negotiations. As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, the services most often privatized are those ancillary services which do not directly impact police crime responses. An example of those ancillary services include response to burglar alarms, court security, security for vehicle impound lots, security for homeless shelters, parking enforcement, airport security, school crossing guards, and parks security. By privatizing these types of services, there would be no detrimental effect upon economically disadvantaged citizens of a community.

Conversely, there is also the concern that private companies will “cream” the services -- taking over the most profitable functions and leaving the public police with residual tasks that are most expensive to perform. The eventual consequence of such a development would be a loss of public confidence in the police and a weakened political support for budgeting funds to cover such police services.

One of the most immediate concerns about the use of private companies involves protecting individuals from the abuse of police powers. The powers of public police are constitutionally limited and courts have placed specific constraints on police practices.

Private security officers, however, are not bound by constitutional guarantees or governmental control when they are employed by individuals and firms in the private sector. The legal status of constraints that apply when at work under contract with the government is less clear and still being established by court decisions, but private security officers themselves are unlikely to be aware of these legal subtleties.

As with all sectors of society, local governments are facing escalating costs from civil lawsuits and from obtaining liability insurance to protect themselves against these lawsuits. Insurance carriers faced with growth in both the size and the number of settlements are pulling out of the high risk public liability market, and some cities and counties find they are unable to obtain liability insurance and are forced to become self insured. Jurisdictions which consider privatization as a means to escape liability must be very cautious. Both the contractor firm and the jurisdiction that hires the contractor may have liability in the case of a lawsuit involving the behavior or performance of the contractor's employees. Recent trends in court decisions indicate that the government cannot escape “third party” liability actions with its contractor's employees and damages may be awarded to the plaintiffs from both the contractor and the government client (Chaiken, 1987).

The possibility of corruption of government officials by a representative of private companies is one concern that is shared by virtually all administrators involved in competitive bidding of contracted services. Any contract for services is likely to introduce vulnerabilities to corruption that were not present when the service was provided by public employees. Although concern about corruption is realistic, as are many of the other issues discussed above, they do not present insurmountable barriers to the privatization process.

The president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Richard Leshner (1990), sees billions of tax dollars to be saved, and quantum leaps in efficiency to be had through privatization. Bluntly, he notes:

There is no great mystery attached to the advantages of privatization. Government, by its very nature, is unable to make the hard

decisions required to achieve that kind of efficiency. It cannot fire incompetent workers or reward more productive ones; it cannot respond quickly to the marketplace; and it cannot innovate. In fact, government's "personnel" rewards are based on growth and bureaucracy, while in the private sector rewards are tied to getting the job done without the expenditure. (p. 270)

As early as the 1980's it was realized by many in the law enforcement field that in order to meet increasing demands for service with strained fiscal and personal services, some non-traditional alternatives must be considered. In the early 1980's, the International Association of Chiefs of Police invited Thomas Wathen, then president of Pinkerton's Security, to address them at their annual conference. Wathen stated:

My guess is that for all the years of building the services you are currently trying to deliver, you've inherited (or grabbed) a fair share of jobs which aren't even related to the penal code. In other words, you're doing a lot of non-police related work. You should be aware that many of these functions could actually be performed without any sworn police personnel being involved. . . . So many jobs could be "contracted" --not just "civilianized" (since you almost always end up paying police wages after a few years). I'm here to tell you that you'd have even greater "control" for a much lower cost to your city. . . You need only write out the specifications and some definite performance guidelines (measuring tools for yourselves) and you'll have a nontraditional way to deliver traditional services at a much lower cost. (p. 277)

In 1989, the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department conducted an analysis of 72 dispatch/call categories. That analysis revealed that the vast majority of those calls and time spent by their officers was in response to non-crime events (Cunningham, 1990). "Most, if not all, of the non-law enforcement activities carried out by our department could be handled by private security organizations... . The tasks could be handled just as effectively, at a lesser expense, and would not require a diminution of overall service to the public", the reported concluded (Cunningham, 1990). [see appendix for list] The task force went on to state that the tasks could be accomplished with relatively unskilled private security employees, thus freeing up officers for "real" police work and "would require less training for those private security personnel assigned to carry out the perfunctory tasks" (Cunningham, 1990, p. 279).

The plan in Kansas City was to use one patrol division to be a test site for a two year experiment for three types of contracts encompassing 22 separate tasks (Cunningham, 1990). The test site was to be funded by the National Institute of Justice. Unfortunately before the experiment was implemented, there were internal changes within the department which resulted in a new Chief of Police and a change in the political climate which caused the project to be put on hold. This experiment would have been the first to do anything on such a large scale and the data would have been extremely useful to the entire law enforcement community in giving guidance on large scale privatization, since it has yet to be done anywhere in the United States.

In speaking with George Murphy, currently President of Security Virtual, Inc. of Fernandina Beach, Florida, he offered his perspective as a former corporate security director for several multi-national corporations including IBM and Mobil.

He advised that many large corporations either have their own security departments or have a contract with a company to provide security because "the corporation wants services that the police just aren't authorized to supply. They want their own ability to examine risks compared to their profitability and apply programs to make them more profitable" (G. Murphy, personal communication, March 4, 1996). He goes on to say that public police have a different goal unrelated to profit or corporate image. Murphy says that corporations at times turn to security consultants "people ready and willing to put priority on that help because they get paid to do so, you "que up" when you're asking the police to help and you're running up against police priorities... such as armed robberies, murders... Your theft of \$10,000 worth of equipment doesn't hold a great deal of priority when compared to priorities of police" (G. Murphy, personal communication, March 4, 1996).

Murphy stated there are many examples around the world where nations have begun to privatize certain police functions. He reported "Indonesia pays a private company to do their customs investigations. Saudi Arabia pays Wackenhut (a Florida corporation) to do their airport law enforcement duties... In Lagos, Nigeria, a corporation can pay for the training, uniforms, salary, and benefits of a policeman, they're called supernumerary policeman, and they're provided to that company or corporation who pays all their expenses. They are sworn policemen from the Lagos, Nigeria police force, but they're assigned to the company who pays all the bills. It is common practice over there" (G. Murphy, personal communication, March 4, 1996).

According to Murphy, Corporations are turning to internal security investigators or consultants because "theft from corporations from friendly nations... we're in an economic war, it's no longer tanks against the Russians, now it's formulas, disks, specs, and bids among national businesses in a globalized economy" (G. Murphy, personal communication, March 4, 1996).

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the privatization of ancillary services has existed for many years; however, the privatization of any other services has not been seriously considered. There has not been much impetus to cause government to consider further privatization.

It may be, however, that the passage of Amendment 10 provides that impetus. In 1992, voters in Florida passed Amendment 10, also known as Save Our Homes amendment. This amendment, which took effect in January 1995, limits increases in property valuations. Homestead property valuation increases are limited to 3 percent per year or the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is less. Limited by the lower CPI, the assessed value of homestead properties in Martin County increased only 2.7 percent for the 1995 tax roll. For the 1996 tax roll, the assessed value of homestead properties will not increase more than 2.5 percent.

Amendment 10 is very similar to California's Proposition 13 in that they both limit increases in assessed values. California's government agencies have experienced severe belt tightening which has resulted in several governments actually filing for bankruptcy.

Although this amendment is fairly new, it has dramatic implications to Florida's government agencies as it limits and/or removes taxable property values from the tax rolls which reduces tax dollars available to all government agencies including Sheriff Departments and Police Departments throughout Florida. As less money is collected, due to limits on assessed values, less money is available to provide vital police services.

According to Laurel Kelly, Martin County, Florida Property Appraiser, "In Martin County in 1995, approximately \$34 million dollars in assessed value was removed from the 1995 tax roll as a result of the assessed value limitation on homestead properties. This \$34 million means a loss of approximately \$629,000 in taxes the county will not collect" (L. Kelly, personal communication, February 29, 1996).

With these types of tax dollar limitations being placed on government entities, we must closely examine how police agencies can continue to provide the same level of services they have in the past with the same or less tax dollars.

In Florida this particular amendment may, in the very near future, cause police agencies to eliminate or reduce non-essential services. Those services could very well then either be provided by government agencies through contract service providers for less money or by private security companies which would be charging the individual citizen for these services.

Police agencies may find it necessary to transfer or shed certain tasks in order to be able to provide the most important police functions without an increase in police officers due to decreased collection of tax revenues to pay for these officers.

According to the Hallcrest Report II, since the early part of this century until the late 1970's, the police assumed more and more non-crime related services. These included assisting the mentally ill, the homeless, runaway children and animals; responding to streetlight outages, potholes, abandoned vehicles, and lost property calls; guarding public buildings and parking lots; and escorting funerals and bank depositors (Cunningham, 1990). By the late 1970's only about 20 percent of all police calls were actually crime related.

Because the public has become used to their local police performing all of these non-crime related functions, in many areas, it may become difficult to shed or transfer non essential functions due to the local politics involved. As tax revenues decrease and demands upon police increase, however, something must be done to provide acceptable services. Many of the above listed services and those mentioned elsewhere in this paper could be handled more efficiently and economically by a private entity specifically trained to handle the problem. In many cases, it does not take fully trained sworn police officers to perform a function. For example, a lesser trained uniformed security guard could guard public buildings or parking lots far more economically than could a police officer, since this function requires less skill and ability than a fully trained police officer is capable of providing.

The advantage to using private security firms for this type of service, according to Chief Steve Belcher of Santa Cruz, California Police Department, is that "the guards do not become government employees, are easy to terminate, and easily replaced" (S. Belcher, personal communication, March 5, 1996) since they are not entitled to the same property rights as government employees.

In Florida, the legal question of whether private police forces are legal is not as clear as in some other states. Florida law specifically allows for the governing body of a county to enter into a contract with a private entity for the operation and maintenance of a jail facility; however, there is no similar statute which would allow for a governing body of a county or a municipality to contract for the operation of a police force. Florida law describes the requirements and authority of a law enforcement officer, and defines an employing agency as any agency or government or municipality of the state which has constitutional statutory authority to employ or appoint persons as officers. The term also includes any private entity which is contracted with the state or the county for the operation and maintenance of a non juvenile detention facility, (Florida Statutes, 1993). Obviously absent in this description is a private entity contracted with the state or county for the operation of a police or law enforcement agency. Without further research, it seems that it would be illegal at this point to turn a full police operation over to a private entity.

Well planned privatization programs, once implemented and if successful, will likely be replicated in many small and large departments (Cunningham, 1990).

As the National Institute of Justice Director, James Stewart, noted, "The responsibility of government to ensure security need not necessarily mean that government must provide all the protective services itself" (Cunningham, 1990, p. 281).

The late criminal justice scholar, Robert Trojanowicz's, view on the future of privatization mirrors closely with many in the field, "One question that need not be asked is whether the trend will persist. We are already too far down the road to turn back. Therefore, the ultimate question is not whether this change is good or bad, but whether these changes will occur piece meal and poorly or thoughtfully and well" (Cunningham, 1990, p. 281).

Assistant Chief Joseph Lyons has been a member of the Stuart Police Department for 19 years. Currently assigned as Commander of the Support Services Division, he is responsible for the Investigations Unit, Professional Standards, Planning and Training, and Information Services. Joseph has worked in all units in the department from patrol to tactical, including an assignment as Commander of the Operations Division responsible for all uniform patrol functions. He enjoys camping and traveling and is active in the community including Leadership Martin County, Kiwanis Club of Stuart, and Redeemer Lutheran Church. He lives in Stuart with his wife, Lori and their three children.

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## Appendix A

The tasks proposed for unarmed private security personnel in Kansas City, Missouri are the following:

- Transport prisoners
- Provide standby for owner on open window or door
- Provide standby for vehicles to be towed
- Assist at traffic, medical, or other emergencies
- Assist stranded motorists
- Perform school crossing guard duties
- Provide standby on road hazards
- Direct traffic on lights out or at barricaded positions
- Respond to 911 hang-up calls from outside pay phones
- Assist elderly and disabled people on minor problems (e.g., lockouts)
- Transport citizens (e.g., victims, witnesses, etc.)
- Assist lost juveniles or elderly people
- Deliver intradepartmental paperwork
- Respond to parking complaints
- Recover found property not involved in crimes (e.g., bicycles, purses, etc.)
- Take walk-in reports (e.g., minor traffic accident)
- Guard crime scenes
- Provide standby for arrival of police officers (e.g., traffic accident, injured person)
- Perform routine tasks (e.g., obtain building listings, provide community and crime prevention information, etc.)