

Police, unions agree: Solicitation curbs needed

By Casey Hays
staff writer

Local police and union officials agree on one thing: Police and fire organizations' solicitations must be regulated.

Legitimate organizations "get swallowed up by the other ones," said one police chief, while an attorney representing the Police Officers Association of Michigan said that because of that, his group has worked hard for state legislation to regulate soliciting. "We welcome that legislation," said POAM general counsel Frank Guido. "I think it will pass — there's a need for it."

For more than a year, Lansing lawmakers have considered legislation to closely regulate police and fire solicitations.

A bill called the Public Safety Solicitation Act was introduced in the state House in early 1991, a follow-up to a similar bill that failed the previous year. If enacted, HB

4396 would force groups soliciting to register with the state, disclose detailed financial information, not confuse or mislead the public, and record all their communications for the state attorney general.

THE LAW would allow a public safety group to solicit for "certain things," such as aiding the spouse and children of an officer or firefighter who died or was injured in the line of duty.

The legislation, in the House Committee on Consumers since last February, was introduced by Detroit Democratic Rep. Curtis Hertel, whose office received a number of complaints from the public about solicitors supposedly representing police and fire agencies.

"We had complaints from constituents and various representatives' constituents," Hertel said. "We wanted to know who these groups are. Also,

they (the solicitors) implied the speed of (public safety) service depended on their contribution."

State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, said lawmakers came close to passing similar legislation last year, but they ran out of time. She said if the issue is voted upon this year, she will support it.

"It has some very good safeguards," Dolan said. "These people should be upfront about who they are, what they're doing and where the money goes."

Complaints about solicitations "have been going on for years," she added.

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer, who has been in an ongoing dispute with the Farmington Hills Police Officers Association over the union's solicitation policy with Midwest Publishing, said he does not believe the proposed legislation goes far enough.

"I THINK IT'S a step in the right direction, but it's not going to resolve many of the complaints we get here," Dwyer said. "Going way back, we've supported this type of legislation so it can be better monitored."

"Still, I do not feel it's appropriate for a police agency to solicit money... especially when it's not necessary."

Guido said most of the POAM units who do soliciting, including the Farmington Hills POA, use the Southfield-based Midwest Publishing Company. He said much of the pending legislation is based on Midwest policies, which include recording all soliciting conversations. "Since we follow that model now, there is no problem," he added.

Farmington Hills firefighters do not solicit money locally, but their state union does, said union president Wally Kurzeja.

"We have really seen no need for it," Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said. He agrees that the state

should regulate such soliciting.

"I think the intentions are good, but too often, it gets abused," he said. He opposes groups "using the good name of the fire department... as their selling tool" and says he disagrees philosophically with some of the techniques used.

In neighboring Farmington, public safety officers work in a combined fire and police department also represented by the POAM. They do not solicit money, but Farmington residents still get phone calls soliciting money for police and fire agencies in other communities.

"I receive calls from residents on a regular basis — not frequently, but regularly," said Public Safety Director Frank Lauhoff. "My concern is that these things be controlled."

"There are several legitimate organizations," he added. "But they get swallowed up by the other ones."

Cop presses schools to bend on book stand

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to Farmington Superintendent Michael Flanagan.

But some Farmington school officials criticize the book for several reasons, including that it contains too much commercial advertising and that it stereotypes individuals.

"I hate to say to a free offer," said Don Cowan, director of building and student services. "In that area, there are a lot of publications. You can just have so many."

But, Cowan said, there are not a lot of parent handbooks.

"I haven't looked at the book for awhile, but (it) seems to me that there were male/female stereotyping, class distinctions, generalizations and catch phrases," Cowan said.

"I have the same concern about someone learning on us to use some materials as to not use some materials that aren't appropriate."

BURKART HAS twice delivered 1,800 books to the school system, but their use was rejected.

The 1990 handbook contains 26 quarter page ads and three pages that list corporate sponsors. Ten ads are for Farmington-area persons or businesses.

They are: Clamdiggers, Farmington; Tachi S. Engineering USA; Farmington Hills Assumption Cathedral; Farmington Hills; Dave Anderson, Farmington Hills; Dr. William Paris, Farmington Hills; Dr. Purnima Mehta, Farmington Hills; Tweeny's Deli & Wine Shoppe, Farmington; John Evers Company, Farmington Hills; Mr. Wright, Farmington; and John Hancock Mutual Insurance, Farmington Hills.

The newest edition contains fewer ads and all are from Farmington-based sponsors, said Ed Jacques, Midwest Publishing vice-president and a Hills resident.

While the older book contains numerous advertisements, Burkart contends that local high school yearbooks do, too. "You have to acknowledge people who give money," Burkart said.

Although the book was rejected by the Farmington Public School District, Burkart said they are being used by several area private schools including Mercy High School, St. Francis Elementary School, St. Paul Lutheran School and Thomas Beahan Junior High School.

The book is also used in a Dearborn Heights' drug education program, Jacques said.

HELEN PRUTOW, Farmington school board member and president-elect of the Michigan Association of School Boards, said she had not seen this particular book. School boards across the state are reluctant to note materials with advertising, she said.

"If our curriculum director, Judy White, doesn't think it is appropriate, I'm with her one hundred percent," Prutow said.

Use of the book is a sidelight of another issue.

Hills police Chief William Dwyer

recently renewed his criticism of the Hills POA's solicitation program with Midwest.

Midwest was hired by the Hills POA for a three-year contract to solicit money for a political action committee and other charity programs, including this drug education handbook.

Officials from both the POA and its parent group, the Police Officers Association of Michigan, are quick to note that Midwest is often confused with other solicitation firms used by police unions like the Michigan Association of Police (MAP) and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

Dwyer declined comment on Midwest's drug education book.

Some 85 percent of donations go to Midwest; 15 percent to the contract-

ed police association, "to keep for their purposes," Jacques said.

Printing and publishing costs for the parent's guide come out of Midwest's 85 percent, he said, which also covers the company's office costs. Donations range from \$15-\$200, Jacques said.

AUTO BUMPER stickers saying "I Love Farmington Hills Police" are given to donors. Jacques stressed that his solicitors never lead donors to believe those bumper stickers will get them out of a traffic ticket or gain any preferential treatment from police.

"That's absolutely absurd," Jacques said. Midwest's record is clean with the State Attorney General's office, he said.

Dwyer says he contacts personally each person who complains to his department about the phone solicitation.

"I have no need to report to the union," he said. In two instances, Dwyer has relayed complaints first to the Farmington Observer and then to the union presidents.

Dwyer has opposed the POA's contract with Midwest as detracting from the professionalism of the department. Burkart termed it a "personal crusade."

In a March 28, 1990, memo, Dwyer instructed his personnel to contact him "immediately" and at home on the weekends if any complaints were received.

Dwyer wrote: "These complaints/questions shall not in any case be re-

ferred to the Midwest Publishing Company or to the POA president. They will be handled directly by the chief or deputy chief."

Jacques said that he has never spoken with Dwyer on this issue.

"The union doesn't dictate" his procedure, Dwyer said. He said that as long as the POA will not show him their contract with Midwest Publishing and will not reveal the percentage the union receives from this contract, he does not feel obligated to inform the union of any complaints.

Also, Dwyer would like to keep Midwest's tapes, rather than just listen to a portion of them.

"He (Dwyer) doesn't want to see the police union raise money for political reasons," Jacques said.

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FREE!

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Breast
Save \$1.60 lb.

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Turkey 89¢
Franks \$1.99 PKG.
Save 40¢ lb.

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Products
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IGA Tablerite
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Cubed Steaks \$1.89 LB.
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IGA Tablerite
BONELESS • CENTER CUT
Pork \$3.29 LB.
Chops
Save \$1.00 lb.

Assorted Varieties
8 Pack
Squeeze-Its 20 oz. Bottles
\$2.99 DEP.

IGA Tablerite
Smokys \$1.59 PKG.
West Virginia #1
Bacon \$1.09 LB.

Assorted Varieties
Betty Crocker
Squeeze-Its
1.54 oz. • With Coupons
FREE!

Country Fresh
Homogenized
Milk \$1.99 Gal.

Assorted Varieties
Specialty
Potatoes
1.54 oz. • With Coupons
FREE!

Assorted Varieties
Cottonelle
Bath Tissue
16 Roll Pkg.
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
Smoky
Links
10 oz. Pkg.
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
El Charrito
Burritos
11 oz. Pkg.
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
Cheese
Singles
1.54 oz. • With Coupons
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
White
Bread
24 oz. Loaf
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
El Charrito
Burritos
11 oz. Pkg.
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
White
Bread
24 oz. Loaf
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

Assorted Varieties
Dutch Twin
Sugar Wafers
10 oz. Pkg.
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Assorted Varieties
El Charrito
Burritos
11 oz. Pkg.
When you buy one at regular price, you get one free. Limit one coupon per package. Coupon expires Sunday, Jan. 12, 1992.

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