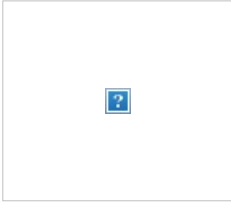


EAST CLEVELAND TO LAYOFF POLICE AND FIRE



A community in East Cleveland is getting ready to layoff a significant portion of the city's most critical workers. On Tuesday layoff notices made their way to 60 of the city's workers. A significant number of those pink slips are in the hands of police officers and firefighters. While, when compared to some of the massive layoffs cities like New York or Miami-Dade may be facing, this seems like a small number, it is in fact the beginning of a devastating loss. By the end of this round of layoffs the community could be forced to layoff almost half of its police force. You may be wondering what the reason for the layoffs is? Well, some people say it is all to do with the city's red light cameras. "This is strictly as a result of the traffic cameras, if we lose the traffic cameras, this is the safety force scenario that we are looking at," said Gary Norton, Jr., the Mayor of East Cleveland, during the city council meeting held on Tuesday night. During the meeting he laid out all of the plans for the layoffs. These layoffs will affect 36 police officers and 14 firefighters as well as other city workers. Mayor Norton made it very clear that these cameras were diverting funds from the city's salaries. During elections in November the voters of East Cleveland will get a choice to decide whether they want the camera or the extra public servants on the payroll. Mayor Norton said that if the voters decide to get rid of the cameras then the city would have some money to pay the workers' salaries. Of course, not everyone agrees with the mayor's assessment. One city councilman, Nathaniel Martin, was not shy with his thoughts on the matter. "If the people decide to keep the cameras, we still need to make the cuts, and I say this with all humility and all conviction, not to put the finger on anyone, we're gonna have to do it." While the police union has made plans to go door to door and talk with voters later in this week, nothing will be decided until the vote about the million dollars a year expense of the cameras is over. The police however are not just worried about their own jobs, but about the overall safety of the community, should the number of officers be diminished. "You're talking about some scary times honestly, we've gone through great strides to lower the crime rate, the crime rate now is lower than it's been in years," said Det. Sgt. Scott Gardner, a police union representative, when interviewed by a journalist for Fox News. Currently, the residents of East Cleveland seem divided on whether or not they should remove the cameras, though some of this may be because of the mixed messages they are getting about how much impact the loss of those cameras would have on keeping police officers on the streets. No specific numbers of officers' jobs saved were mentioned at the meeting.