

Sen. Douglas Gets Tasered

State Senator Tasered in Show of Support for Law Enforcement

By Crystal Tatum, Staff Reporter
crystal.tatum@newtoncitizen.com

COVINGTON — State Sen. John Douglas had a shocking Friday morning.

Douglas found himself on the business end of a Taser gun fired by a captain with the Newton County Sheriff's Office.

But there's no need to scour the paper for the legislator's mug shot: It was a voluntary act — Douglas' way of showing local law enforcement officers that he supports their work.

Sheriff Joe Nichols said authorities who carry Tasers are first required to be Tasered themselves so they know what the experience is like.

"I've made it a point in my public career to be a champion of public safety. ... I feel like you have to lead from out front, you can't lead from behind," Douglas said.

So, before a throng of law enforcement personnel during a Friday morning training session, Douglas got zapped. Rather than penetrating his skin with the taser prongs, Capt. Mark Thomas used a training device that was clipped to Douglas' shirt to fire a low-voltage shot.

Though the pain lasted only seconds, Douglas said the shock's effects took a while to get over. "The actual feeling was like waves of electricity going through your body. It only lasts a few seconds and it doesn't leave any pain, but it did leave me kind of washed out and lethargic. If you had to give that two or three times to somebody trying to get away from police, I can't imagine. I can only attribute that to being hard-headed, because it got my attention the first time out," he said.

A Taser is a weapon that delivers an electric shock and is used by law enforcement to disable a suspect without resorting to lethal force.

Douglas said he thinks Tasers are good tools for law enforcement, adding that the devices have saved lives of officers and suspects. "Not letting them use Tasers is like tying one hand behind their back and telling them to do their job anyway," he said.

Photo: Sue Ann Kuhn-Smith (Newton Citizen) State Sen. John Douglas gets Tasered by Newton County Sheriff's Office Capt. Mark Thomas Friday morning while Sgt. Darrell Goodman and Lt. James Pilgrim provide support. The tasing took place during a training session for the Covington/Newton County SWAT Team, the Newton County Sheriff's Office warrants division and Covington Police officers. Douglas said he volunteered to be Tasered to show local law enforcement that he's supportive of their efforts. "This is something I did to show them I know what they go through," he said.