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## Controlling Crime and Disorder in Rental Properties: The Perspective of the Rental Property Manager

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**Abstract:** *A rental property manager is expected to fulfill a central role in third-party policing programs. Despite the growing implementation of third-party policing programs, little evaluative evidence exists on these programs, let alone the perspective of the third party who is expected to fulfill a regulatory or enforcement function. This research presents the findings of a mail survey administered to rental property managers who were expected to assume a third-party policing role under a newly enacted nuisance rental property ordinance in State College, PA. The survey focused on identifying the rental property management techniques that would impact crime and disorder and also gathered general opinions on the ordinance. The survey was conducted in conjunction with a legal impact study which found that the ordinance was very successful in reducing crime and disorder in nuisance rental properties. The survey found that the majority of rental property managers have a desire and are willing to assist in crime prevention and control, although need direction from the police on how to fulfill this role.*

**Keywords:** civil remedies for crime control, crime prevention, private justice, third-party policing

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### INTRODUCTION

It has long been recognized that modern societies rely on systems of private justice (Henry 1994) or non-state mechanisms of social control to prevent, police, or otherwise reduce or punish deviance or law violations by members who are involved in various institutional settings. These settings include workplaces (Henry 1983), shopping malls (Manzo 2005), schools, universities, and housing complexes, and self-help and mutual aid groups. The present paper reports on a study of the third-party policing (Buerger and Mazerolle 1998; Desmond and Valdez 2013; Mazerolle and Buerger 2005) of rental properties in a college town and focuses on the social control mechanisms and perceptions of the rental property manager.

State College Borough is located in central Pennsylvania. State College is often associated with being home to the Pennsylvania State University. Penn State is the largest university in Pennsylvania, and the 11th largest in the United States with approximately 44,000 students

(University Budget Office n.d.). Conversely, State College Borough is only four square miles; however, it is the most populated borough in Pennsylvania with 39,898 residents. State College Borough geographically surrounds Penn State University. Approximately 19,000 Borough residents are Penn State students, most of who live in rental housing (State College Police Department Records Management n.d.). Consistent with the social disorganization literature (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson and Groves 1989), there is a high correlation between rentals and crime in State College. Crime maps that overlay rental density and crime density in State College show that the majority of indoor and outdoor crimes occur in and around rentals (State College Police Department Records Management n.d.). Additionally, since at least 1970, there has been a disproportionate and growing number of rental units in State College Borough, and this trend has continued to the present day (2013) with nearly 80% (9,717) of all housing units in State College Borough designated as renter-

occupied (State College Police Department Records Management n.d.).

In response to the data and perceived high correlation between crime and rentals, the growing complaints at the neighborhood level regarding quality of life issues, outward migration, and diminishing resources, the State College Borough Council revised their Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance in November, 2004 (State College Police Department Records Management n.d.). Ordinances such as this normally involve civil penalties and have been used or created throughout the United States when criminal laws have been ineffective at addressing a variety of issues ranging from neighborhood quality of life issues to domestic violence protection orders (Mazerolle and Roehl 1998). The revision to the State College Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance allows for suspension of rental permits for continued criminal activity. The revision of the nuisance rental ordinance is directed at the rental property managers and essentially holds them accountable for crime occurring on the property, with the threat of rental permit suspension, thereby not allowing the property to be rented. This practice is known as “third-party policing,” which is part of the growing trend of using civil remedies for crime prevention and crime control (Mazerolle and Ransley 2005). Briefly defined, third-party policing is, “police insistence of involvement of non-offending third parties (usually place managers) to control criminal and disorderly behavior, creating a *de facto* new element of public duty” (Buerger and Mazerolle 1998:301). As stated earlier, very little research has been conducted on third party policing programs, and even less on the party expected to fulfill the third party policing role. The purpose of this research is to examine the attitudes and practices of rental property managers in a third party policing role.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Third-Party Policing

Third-party policing can be applied very formally as with the State College Nuisance Property Ordinance, which is specifically aimed at property managers, or third-party policing can be more of an ad hoc undertaking where the police coerce business owners, property managers, or other parties who have some real or perceived control (Mazerolle and Ransley 2005). Third-party policing can also be initiated by neighborhood groups such as the Office of Neighborhood Associations in Portland, OR that helped enact a municipal drug-house ordinance allowing the city to impose civil penalties on the property owner in situations where drug dealing had occurred on the property (Davis and Lurigio 1996). Whether third-party policing is an informal or formal endeavor, or initiated by the government or community group, there is one consistent feature, which is referred to as the “legal lever” (Mazerolle and Ransley 2005). The “legal lever” provides any level of

government with the legal basis to coerce the third party to change the routine activities of the tenants (Mazerolle and Ransley 2005). In State College, the legal lever is the Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance. The threat of accumulating negative points, that is part of the Ordinance, and subsequently potentially having rental permit suspension for six to twelve months, would result in substantial monetary loss to the property manager. And so the assumption, from a rational choice model of human nature, is that property managers will work to ensure compliance.

### Rental Property Manager Perspective

As stated earlier, the rental property manager is expected to fulfill a central role in third-party policing programs that focus on crime in rental properties. Little evaluative research has been completed on third-party policing programs, and even less has gathered the key perspective of the rental property manager. The following two studies focus on the rental property manager and provide valuable insight to their role and attitudes about the third-party policing programs.

A 1992 study of rental property managers across five cities (Alexandria, VA, Houston, TX, Milwaukee, MN, San Francisco, CA, and Toledo, OH) that have some version of a nuisance property ordinance was conducted to determine the managers’ attitudes and responses to being the target of these programs (Smith and Davis 1998). The sample for this present study consisted of four or five rental property managers from each of the five sites listed above; this resulted in a total of 22 interviewees. The study was conducted using telephone interviews that consisted of several open and closed ended questions related to the opinion of the rental property manager regarding the nuisance property ordinance and the actions they have taken as a result of it. The study found that the rental property managers were in favor of removing drug dealers from their properties. In fact, half of the rental property managers were those who reported the drug dealing to the police in the first place (Smith and Davis 1998). The property managers also reported that they were concerned about the abatement notices they received because they were worded in such a way that it sounded as if the managers were responsible and /or profiting from the drug dealers living in their apartments. The property managers also expressed a concern for retaliatory actions from evicted tenants. Out of the sample of 22, one case involving a physical assault on a rental property manager was reported. Finally, the rental property managers expressed a concern for innocent people, often family members of the drug dealers, having to move out as a result of the eviction notices.

A larger study of Cook County Rental Property Managers in 1993 showed some differences from the above referenced study (Smith and Davis 1998). First, the

rental property managers reported that tenants receiving eviction notices were more likely to resist the eviction than in the previous study. Half of the tenants refused to move out after receiving an eviction notice, and over a third (36%) appealed the eviction in court. With regard to retaliatory actions by evicted tenants, 18% of the tenants threatened the rental property manager and 8% damaged their property. In both studies, the rental property managers reported that they changed their rental management practices as a result of pressure from the local government, and believed that their actions reduced crime at their rental properties. Both of these studies suggest that rental property managers have the ability to prevent and control crime.

### **STATE COLLEGE NUISANCE RENTAL PROPERTY ORDINANCE**

The 2004 revision to the State College Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance created a point system for certain local/ordinance and criminal violations occurring at rentals in State College Borough. The point system is maintained by the State College Borough Department of Health. The points assigned to a rental permit vary based on the severity of the offense. The following local/ordinance violations are one point violations: refuse; sidewalk obstruction; grass and weeds; and dogs. Two point violations are: disorderly conduct; alcohol possession or consumption by a minor; drug possession; simple assault; harassment; open lewdness; and indecent exposure. Three point violations are: furnishing alcohol to a minor; aggravated assault; rape; statutory sexual assault; involuntary deviate sexual intercourse; sexual assault; aggravated indecent assault; and possession with intent to deliver controlled substances. Points accumulate on the date of the offense and are removed one year after being assessed. Points can also be removed if the accused is found not guilty. Additionally, the maximum number of points that can accumulate in a 24 hour period is three. When complaints are made by the property manager or tenants of the premises that result in prosecution against another person at the rental, these violations are excluded and points are not assigned. A Nuisance Rental Property Report, including the rental address, specific violations, and points assessed, is updated weekly and available online, or by telephone, to property managers. Upon accumulation of five points, the rental property manager receives written notice indicating that the rental has five points, that it is creating a nuisance in the neighborhood, and that the property manager shall submit a written correction plan within 30 days of notification to the Borough identifying how the ongoing problems will be addressed, e.g., eviction, meeting with tenants. If the property manager fails to submit a written correction plan and the rental subsequently accumulates 10 points, then a rental permit suspension is more likely. Upon

accumulation of 10 points, the rental permit may be suspended for six months to one year, at the end of the current lease. A rental permit in suspension causes the corresponding rental to be ineligible for rental, resulting in significant pecuniary loss to the property owner.

Prior to discussing the survey responses and perspective of the rental property managers, it is important to note that the survey was completed in conjunction with a legal impact study of the Ordinance. Briefly, the legal impact study employed an interrupted time series design and examined five years of pre-Ordinance nuisance rental crime data against five years of post-Ordinance rental crime data. Also, the study included a non-equivalent dependent variable that examined all crime in State College exclusive of rentals during the same ten year time period. In the five years after the Ordinance was enacted, crime in nuisance rental properties decreased by 55%, while the general crime rate outside of rentals in State College increased by approximately 8%. The Ordinance was found to be successful in reducing crime in nuisance rental properties.

### **CURRENT STUDY**

A survey was mailed to all 769 State College Rental Property Managers who manage the 9,717 permitted rental properties in State College. The first mailing occurred on March 28th 2011, and a second mailing occurred approximately four weeks later on April 22nd, 2011, with the final surveys collected on May, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Of the surveys actually delivered (n = 743) a total of 254 were returned through the two mailings, resulting in a 34% response rate.

#### **Survey Responses**

The survey consisted of 13 questions and a final section allowing the respondent to add additional comments. The first question on the survey inquired about the length of time (in years) that the rental property manager had managed a rental in State College Borough. The range for this response was one year through 43 years, the mean was 14 years, the median was 11 years, and the mode was 10 years.

The second question asked the rental property manager about the financial importance of keeping their rental(s) occupied. The penalty under the Ordinance is rental permit suspension which would result in loss of revenue from rent. The purpose of this question was to determine how important it is to rental property managers to maintain their rental permit and draw revenue from the rental. If the rental property managers rate the financial aspect as important, the general proposition is that they would do more, or at least enough, to keep violations from occurring at their rental unit(s). Not surprisingly, an overwhelming majority (82.1%) of respondents consider

the occupancy and revenue from rent to be “very important.” A much smaller percentage (14.2%), rated this as “somewhat important,” and approximately 3% of respondents rated keeping their rental unit occupied as “not important.” These responses provide some empirical support that the penalty under the Ordinance is focused in an area that is important to most rental property managers. Based on this, one could assume that the threat of rental permit suspension could encourage a rental property manager to assume more responsibility for crime(s) at their rentals.

Question three inquired whether potential tenants were required to complete an application. Over half (62.6%,  $n = 159$ ) of the respondents required an application. Ideally, the number of rental property managers who require an application should be higher. This is a critical point for preventing crime at rental properties as potential problem tenants can be screened out. The participants who responded that they did require an application were then asked to indicate if factors such as a criminal history, negative reference from previous landlord, and/or other factors would disqualify the potential tenant. Of the 159 who required an application, 61% ( $n = 97$ ) would disqualify an applicant for having a criminal history. A much higher percentage (86%,  $n = 138$ ) would disqualify an applicant for a negative reference from a previous landlord. The final category, “other,” allowed space for the rental property manager to specify. A little less than half (45%,  $n = 72$ ) checked this and all who checked it indicated “credit” or “poor credit” as the reason for disqualifying a potential tenant. Again, in order for the rental property manager to fulfill their third-party policing role, tenants with a criminal history, negative reference from a previous landlord, and/or poor credit should likely be eliminated as a potential applicant.

Question four inquired if a co-signer was required on the lease and if that co-signer was contacted if the tenant broke a provision of the lease. One-third ( $n = 85$ ) of the rental property managers required a cosigner and slightly less ( $n = 76$ ) contacted the cosigner in the event of the tenant breaking a provision of the lease. A co-signer can serve in assisting the rental property manager in controlling the behavior of the tenant(s). For example, in State College, many student renters would likely have their parents as a co-signer. The parents could be contacted in the event of behavior that violates the lease. A co-signer may not always have a high level of emotional attachment such as a parental figure; however they are, at a minimum, financially tied to the lease as well and could suffer loss if the tenant fails to abide by the lease. If more rental property managers required co-signers and subsequently made contact with them when tenants were in violation of the lease this practice would provide the rental property manager with another tool to prevent and control violations at the rental property.

Question five inquired about how often the rental property manager visited the rental unit. A little less than one third (29.2%,  $n = 76$ ) reported a weekly visit to the rental, about a quarter (23.2%,  $n = 59$ ) visited monthly, 36.6% ( $n = 93$ ) reported a visit once every few months, 6.3% ( $n = 16$ ) reported a visit once per year, and 3.9% ( $n = 10$ ) reported that they never visited the rental unit. In order to fulfill a crime prevention and control role, the rental property managers need to be making more frequent checks of the rental unit(s). Visiting once a week or month is acceptable, although the number of checks would largely depend on the type of tenants and their behavior. For example, problematic tenants would require the rental property manager to make more frequent checks of the rental.

Question six asked about how often a full inspection of the rental was completed (not including the end of the lease inspection). About 40% ( $n = 101$ ) reported conducting a full inspection at least twice per year, one third ( $n = 84$ ) reported an annual inspection, 14.2% ( $n = 36$ ) reported conducting an inspection less than once per year, and 13% ( $n = 33$ ) reported that they never conducted a full inspection of the rental. Conducting announced inspections of the rental allows for the rental property manager to be aware of criminal activity and/or violations of the lease. Examples could include drug dealing and manufacturing, excessive partying, and unauthorized tenants. It also allows for the rental property manager to make sure that the interior of the rental is being cared for properly.

Questions seven through eleven dealt directly with the Ordinance’s point system and were the only questions on the survey that mention the point system. Question seven asked the rental property manager about their level of familiarity with the State College Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance and provided a Likert scale from 1 (Not at all Familiar) through 5 (Extremely Familiar). The following are the responses for each: 1 (19.3%,  $n = 49$ ); 2 (15.4%,  $n = 39$ ); 3 (24%,  $n = 61$ ); 4 (23.6%,  $n = 60$ ); and 5 (17.7%,  $n = 45$ ). The fact that one third is not very familiar and a quarter is only moderately familiar with the Ordinance is surprising, especially considering the reported financial significance of maintaining a rental. This raises the question or issue of how much an impact the Ordinance can have if the targeted rental property managers are unaware of the Ordinance and the consequences of violating it.

Question eight asked the rental property manager how often they checked the Nuisance Rental Property Point System. As a reminder, the list of rental properties with points is updated weekly and available online, by phone, or in person. Very few (2.4%,  $n = 6$ ) reported checking the list weekly. Only about 5% ( $n = 12$ ) check it monthly, 8.7% ( $n = 22$ ) reported checking it once every few months, 6.7% ( $n = 17$ ) check it once a year, and a large majority (77.6%,  $n = 197$ ) reported that they never check the

Nuisance Rental Property Point System for points assigned. The low frequency of checks for points is not surprising based on the low level of familiarity as reported in the previous questions, however it is very important that the rental property manager is both familiar with the Ordinance and knows if their rental has points so that action can be taken.

Question nine asked the rental property manager if they informed new tenants of the Ordinance and if they informed them of the specific violations listed in the Ordinance that would result in point assignment. Two-thirds (66.9%, n = 170), reported that they do not inform tenants of the Ordinance. Of the 84 (32.4%) rental property managers who do inform tenants about the Ordinance, 53 (63%) notify the tenants about the specific violations that result in point accumulation. The lack of knowledge of the Ordinance by the rental property managers has an impact here as well. The lack of notification to the majority of tenants raises the same issue as the rental property managers not being aware of it, or the consequences.

Question ten asked the rental property manager if their lease prohibited the tenant from committing the offenses listed in the State College Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance. A little over half (51.6%, n = 131) of the rental property managers reported that their lease does contain these regulations. One could reasonably assume that most leases would include this provision, although the lack of rental property management knowledge precludes it.

Question eleven asked if the rental property manager contacted the tenant(s) for violations that resulted in point accumulation and if the rental property manager contacted them, the nature (verbal, fine, threat of eviction, other) of the contact that was requested. A little less than half (44.5%, n = 113) reported contact with the tenant for violations resulting in point accumulation. Of the 113 rental property managers who contacted the tenant, about three-quarters (74.3%, n = 84) gave the tenant a verbal warning, 44 (38.9%) assessed a fine to the tenant, 65 (57.5%) threatened eviction, and 32 (28.3%) reported some other action. The rental property managers who contact tenants for point violations are beginning to fulfill their role under third-party policing with verbal warnings, fines, and the threat of eviction, although there is room for improvement of these rates as these control practices are the main leverage points for the rental property manager in controlling tenant behavior.

Questions twelve and thirteen inquired about the rental property manager's attitude toward their third-party policing role. Both questions asked the rental property manager to state their level of agreement on a five point Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) through 5 (Strongly Agree). Question/statement twelve inquired about the rental property manager's level of agreement regarding their ability to deter or prevent crime at the rental unit. About one-third (33.5%, n = 85) strongly agreed (5) with this statement, 27.2% (n = 69) responded 4; 24.8% (n =

63) responded 3; 8.3% responded 2; and 6.3% (n = 16) strongly disagreed (1) with the belief that their actions can deter or prevent crime at their rental unit. Even though there is a lower than expected level of familiarity with the Ordinance, the majority of rental property managers believe that they do have the ability to deter or prevent crime.

Question thirteen asked the rental property manager to state their level of agreement with it being their responsibility as a rental property manager to take actions against tenants to deter or prevent crime at the rental unit. A little more than a third (39%, n = 99) strongly agreed with this statement. A little less than a quarter (22%, n = 56) responded with a rating of 4, 17.3% (n = 44) responded with a 3, 9.1% (n = 23) responded with a 2, and 12.6% (n = 32) responded with a 1 and strongly disagreed with the responsibility of taking actions against the tenant to deter or prevent crime at the rental unit. Similar to the findings for question twelve, the majority of rental property managers feel it is their responsibility to take crime prevention action against tenants. There is a high level of willingness on the part of the rental property manager to engage the tenant, although the low level of understanding of the Ordinance and subsequent actions to take through the lease inhibit the potential of the rental property manager to prevent and deter crime.

### Qualitative Comments

The final section of the survey provided the respondents space to provide any comments. Well over half (n = 159) of the respondents included comments. These comments fell into four distinct categories or themes. The most common theme (n=85) was related to the rental property manager's individual property management practices. These comments generally took the form of descriptions of the specific actions of the rental property manager. The following are some of the comments that typify this category:

### Prevention through screening and surveillance

- *"My lease states that any tenant or guest may not be in violation of any laws. If they are, they break the lease. If they break the lease they can be evicted or at a minimum not renewed."* Respondent # 615
- *"I patrol every Friday and Saturday night and my tenants know it."* Respondent # 722
- *"I interview and check four references. I visit their current residence. I read the lease with them before signing. I explain they are "guardians" of my "retirement plan" and thank them. I do drive-byes and stop in often. I ask them to be respectful of neighbors and explain the neighbors are "my eyes" and will notify me first, then the police if there is a problem. This "recipe" has worked well for me. I*

*choose good people and maintain a presence.”*  
Respondent #610

- *“The most important thing that can be done is a careful review of application, with review of references, and prior landlords. This is often difficult with students since this may be their first rental.”*  
Respondent #145
- *“All of our tenants come with recommendations from friends or prior tenants who can vouch for the integrity and responsibility of the incoming renters. We have never had any problems with our tenants and have always renewed their annual leases at least once or twice.”* Respondent #280
- *“In addition to a local ‘person-in-charge,’ we have always ‘counted’ on one of the tenants to provide a certain amount of oversight to the other tenants.”*  
Respondent #264
- *“We patrol our properties on football weekends and prohibit parties/loud or disruptive behavior. Students learn quickly that we patrol and seldom cause problems. Our lease prohibits parties (any # larger than # of tenants + 1 guest) in general and kegs specifically.”* Respondent #746
- *“We enforce all condo rules and notify parents of infractions. We also require payment of all fines for infractions. We have called law enforcement when finding evidence of drug use in the unit, but have had no other evidence of illegal activity.”* Respondent #83

### **Prevention through exclusion of specific categories of resident**

The second most common theme (n = 39) was that the rental property manager does not rent to undergraduates. In some cases the respondent specifically identified this.

- *“I don’t rent to undergrads.”* Respondent #322
- *“We do not have undergraduate students as tenants.”*  
Respondent #509

Other respondents alluded to this practice of not renting to undergraduate students.

- *“All tenants must be a grad student or professional.”*  
Respondent #366
- *“Our tenants are long-term, families, retired people and professionals. We do not have a problem with crime.”* Respondent #747

### **Challenges to the Ordinance**

The next most common theme (n = 19) were negative comments about the Ordinance:

- *“The Nuisance Property Point System is close to unconstitutional. The tenant’s actions are not someone else’s responsibility.”* Respondent #514

- *“I am not a policeman. Pay me and I will be happy to enforce the laws.”* Respondent #669
- *“I believe the ordinance is a joke! I should not be responsible in any way for someone else’s actions. If someone is causing a problem cite them. The point system is ridiculous.”* Respondent #714
- *“Property managers are neither police nor parents and since they have the authority of neither the Borough should not penalize them for the misconduct of tenants.”* Respondent #10

### **Knowledge deficiency among residence managers**

The final theme (n = 16) that emerged included comments that indicated that the respondent does not know about the Ordinance, or misunderstands the Ordinance:

- *“We were not aware of the Nuisance Property Point System. Is this new? We would like to learn more about it. Thank you!”* Respondent #153
- *“I have never seen or heard about this Ordinance.”* Respondent #189
- *“If the State College Nuisance Property Ordinance is so important why haven’t I as owner been notified?”* Respondent #716
- *“We don’t know what is in the Nuisance Property Ordinance.”* Respondent #629
- *“I was under the impression that I would receive notification if there was a problem.”* Respondent #582
- *“I do not think we have ever gotten any points on the Nuisance Property Point System. Honestly, I don’t know how to check that. I always assumed that if we got a point or points I would receive a letter or some correspondence.”* Respondent #745

### **Summary of Qualitative Findings**

The qualitative comments provided additional context to the preceding survey questions. The reports of how rental property managers specifically manage their properties through the screening process and extra checks of the property are supported in the literature. The strong stance on not renting to undergraduates was expected from the previous literature, also. Some permits do not allow for undergraduate student housing. The fact that some of the rental property managers felt it was important to note the relationship between undergraduate housing and accumulation of points, under the Ordinance, seems to indicate that they assume most of the issues with points are related to student housing. The derogatory comments about the Ordinance from some rental property managers are not surprising; in fact, more of those comments were expected based on the literature. One issue that relates to

this displeasure could be that the Ordinance does not provide any incentive for compliance, but rather only the threat of punishment for not doing so. It is possible that offering an incentive in conjunction with requiring rental property managers to adopt best practices would likely improve the rental property managers' perception of the Ordinance. The small group (n=16) who made comments regarding not knowing about the Ordinance or misunderstanding how it works is somewhat surprising given the severe penalty of rental permit suspension. The issue of awareness among rental property managers is obviously important from a deterrence perspective. If the rental property manager is unaware of the Ordinance and penalty they are unlikely to alter their management practices in response to the Ordinance and the expected consequences for violations. Also, if the rental property manager is unaware of the Ordinance they will not pass this information on to tenants through a lease or subsequently enforce those provisions of a lease. The issue of non-awareness or low-level of awareness was also present in the survey on question seven where one third of rental property managers reported being not very familiar and a quarter are only moderately familiar. This issue seems to be a larger problem that certainly requires action.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The most significant findings of this research are that the majority of rental property managers are willing to assume the third-party policing role, and also that they may not necessarily know how to effectively fulfill the role. It is also clear that efforts need to be made to educate some rental property managers regarding the Ordinance since more than expected reported not being familiar with it, although the rental property managers have, and do, receive information on the Ordinance every year when their permit is renewed. It is promising that the majority of rental property managers feel a responsibility for the crime committed in their rental(s) and believe that they have the ability to exercise some level of control over it. In addition, it is evident that most rental property managers need to be trained on best practices for controlling crime in their rental(s). Practices such as an application and screening process, requiring a lease and co-signer, regular checks and inspections of the rental, informing the tenants of the Nuisance Rental Property Ordinance and including penalties and/or eviction conditions in the lease for committing crimes and acquiring points, and checking to see if the rental has accumulated any points, are all simple steps that the rental property manager could take to control crime and disorder in their rental. These simple steps would create a network of control that would hopefully deter tenants from committing crime, but also serve as a set of tools to control the tenant in the event that crime does occur.

From a broader perspective, there are many communities that are similar to State College in terms of not only being a "college town," but also many communities have high density rental housing with high rates of tenant turnover, and higher rates of crime and disorder in rentals. This type of ordinance may be a viable strategy for these communities. It is important that the focus of these types of strategies recognize that while a reduction of crime and disorder is a long-term goal, the relationship with the rental property manager as the third-party police is the key to the success of the strategy.

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