

Testimony of Joseph A. D'Amico
Superintendent of State Police
Before the Legislative Fiscal Committees
On the 2015-2016 Executive Budget
February 26, 2015

Thank you Chairman *DeFrancisco*, Chairman *Farrell* and distinguished members of the Committees for the opportunity to discuss with you Governor Cuomo's Budget for the Division of State Police. I am Joseph D'Amico, Superintendent of State Police.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Legislature for its past support of the New York State Police. Because of your support, the New York State Police continues to enjoy its well-deserved reputation as one of the best law enforcement agencies in the nation.

Since its inception nearly a century ago, the State Police has consistently provided service through its core mission: to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend criminals and to cooperate with any other agency whether Federal, State or local. Our current mission priorities include reducing the number of deaths, injuries and property damage caused by motor vehicle accidents through vehicle and traffic enforcement and education; providing professional police services to communities and investigative support to departments around the State; engaging in emergency preparedness, planning and response activities; and serving a crucial role in the State's counter-terrorism efforts working with Federal, local and other State agencies. The continued safety of the people of New York State is the utmost priority of all of these partners.

As you are aware, 87% of the appropriations made for State Police operations are in support of personnel service obligations, of which approximately 90% supports the salaries and overtime expenses of sworn members. The vast majority of the non-personal service appropriations made in support of State Police operations are best characterized as non-discretionary expenditures. Expenditures for vehicles, equipment, facilities and communications are all essential to providing the tools necessary for the men and women of the State Police to fulfill their law enforcement missions.

An Entrance Examination for new Troopers was recently held for the first time in several years. We continue to conduct Academy classes so that adequate staffing levels are maintained to perform our core mission priorities. We make the reasonable and prudent staffing decisions to maintain the levels of service while insuring the safety of our members. We continuously assess and evaluate our deployments to maximize provision of police services, and we always prioritize maintaining the staffing levels of our Troopers on patrol.

My first and foremost priority continues to be the safety of the public and of our Troopers who protect them. Toward that end, we will continue to provide our Troopers with the necessary equipment and other valuable resources to achieve the best levels of safety in the performance of their duty.

The Governor has dedicated funding in his budget to the Joint Task Force Empire Shield to enhance our efforts to deter and detect terrorism at a time when these acts are constantly a threat to safety of New Yorkers. As a result, New Yorkers live in one of the safest large states in the

nation. Using specific targeted enforcement strategies, State Troopers are assigned to potential target locations with Federal and local partners to provide greater visibility and protection for the public.

The State Police is unique as the only law enforcement agency in New York State with the ability to deploy large numbers of professionally trained, sworn police officers anywhere in the State on short notice in response to an emergency or natural disaster. The State Police is also available for large-scale deployments to meet a particular immediate need for law enforcement services in any community. The Governor has identified the experiences from past disasters as an opportunity for improvements in disaster preparedness and response readiness. We actively participate in this effort through our partnerships with the Office of Emergency Management and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. We dedicate staffing and resources and maintain a cooperative working relationship with these partners.

Efforts will continue this year to combat illegal drug use. Many of our communities have experienced rising incidents of heroin and opioid abuse. The State Police has received a COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program grant which will advance public safety by providing funding to investigate illicit activities related to the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine. This award will be used to provide better equipment to Troopers and laboratory personnel and to effect improvements in data tracking to allow increased and more effective enforcement strategies. Our Troopers, as first responders, have actively administered Naloxone to save lives in medical emergencies involving drug overdose resulting in 25 successful saves to date.

The use of social media to foster the relationship between the agency and the citizens we serve has been successful in improving cooperation with law enforcement efforts in the communities we serve. By posting safety and crime alert information on Twitter and Facebook, the State Police have successfully enhanced investigative capabilities resulting in fugitive arrests and cases solved.

The New York State Police Forensic Laboratory System provides services to a majority of the counties within the State. For instance, we perform over 60% of impaired driving toxicology criminal casework in the State. Of those cases, approximately 50% are for agencies other than the State Police. The laboratory provides certification of breath testing reference materials for every law enforcement agency in the State. The State Police Laboratory also serves as the sole data entry point in the State for the FBI Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). The success of DNA in the identification and exoneration of suspects in criminal investigations is well-documented. DNA helps prevent crime through expedited identifications, exonerates the innocent and convicts the guilty. Efficiencies have been implemented in the DNA casework section of the lab resulting in a 60% decrease in the time required for the overall analysis process to be completed. The Governor's budget provides funding to keep necessary scientific equipment and technology up to date and to allow effective and efficient provision of service to all agencies who are customers of the State Police Laboratory System.

Throughout the coming year, we will continue to seek and effect improvements to technology for our investigators and office staff, as well as for our troopers in the field. Improvements to in-car technology and providing increased investigative tools to our people is underway and will continue. Inter-operability with our local law enforcement partners is

imperative for insuring that we can provide the best level of public safety and police services for New Yorkers.

We will continue to look for additional efficiencies through our partnerships with other law enforcement agencies throughout the State and through consolidation of State government services where practical and possible.

New Yorkers have come to expect excellent service by a stable, well-deployed and adequately-resourced State Police. I am proud to say that New Yorkers can be confident their expectations are being met. It is the integrity, knowledge, dedication and quality of our men and women that distinguishes the New York State Police. I am honored and privileged to be a part of this premier police agency and its great traditions.

I thank you for your support of the State Police and for this opportunity today to address you.

