

Testimony of Joseph A. D'Amico
Superintendent of State Police
Before the Legislative Fiscal Committees
On the 2012-2013 Executive Budget
January 30, 2012

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 Governor for the opportunity to serve as the Superintendent and to thank the Legislature for its past support of the New York State Police. Because of your past support, the New York State Police is recognized as one of the premier law enforcement agencies in the United States.

On April 11, 1917, Governor Whitman signed the Wells-Mills Bill into law under Chapter 161 of the Laws of 1917. The basic role of the State Police as established in the original law is essentially unchanged to this day:

"It shall be the duty of the State Police to prevent and detect crime and apprehend criminals. They shall also be subject to the call of the Governor and empowered to cooperate with any other department of the State or with local authorities."

The State Police was established as a full service law enforcement agency to provide police services to the many areas of the State without police protection. As the State Police approaches its centennial anniversary, the importance of its original charter is as significant now as it was back then.

My first and foremost priority continues to be the safety of the public and our Troopers who protect them. The Division of State Police is constantly working cooperatively with other State and local agencies on many projects to further increase public safety. Furthermore, we are establishing interoperable communications networks statewide through participation with regional consortiums and sharing of resources including public-private partnerships.

The New York State Police Forensic Laboratory System provides services to a majority of the counties within the State. For instance, approximately 60 % of the toxicology laboratory work we perform in the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity and in furtherance of highway safety is done for agencies other than State Police. 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. The Governor's proposed law to collect DNA samples for all crimes is a critical step to further this success and ensure that we provide the citizens of the State the best public safety. DNA helps prevent crime, exonerate the innocent and convict the guilty.

As you are aware, it is the responsibility of the State Police to ensure highway safety, to prevent crime and enforce the law and to provide high quality support to law enforcement agencies across the State. Our mission priorities include reducing the deaths, injuries and property damage caused by motor vehicle accidents through vehicle and traffic enforcement and education, reducing violent crime statewide, providing support to local law enforcement agencies and coordinating cooperative crime fighting efforts with all Federal, State and local counterparts.

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.

To maintain our core public safety responsibilities while at the same time ensuring that resources are at levels necessary to maintain essential service levels, we continuously assess and evaluate our deployment to maximize provision of police services. For example, we prioritized staffing of Troopers on patrol over less essential administrative and supervisory positions. The Governor's Budget recognizes that in order to maintain necessary levels of quality service there must be Academy Training classes this year for the next generation of Troopers. With these training classes, the State Police mission will be preserved but we cannot supplant local resources if local governments reduce or eliminate law enforcement services in their communities.

We will continue to look for additional efficiencies through our partnerships with other law enforcement agencies throughout the State and through consolidation of government services where practical and possible. Throughout the past year, consolidation projects of IT services with other state agencies have been strategized and are being implemented. In addition, we will work to further reduce spending in all areas of non-personal services.

As you are aware, 85% 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 nonpersonal 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.

New Yorkers can rightfully share a tremendous sense of pride for the many accomplishments of the men and women of the State Police and their daily efforts to keep New York State safe. 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.