



# **Testimony Before the New York State Budget Hearing Committee**

**Tuesday, January 31, 2017**

**Given by Christopher M. Quick. President**

**New York State Police Investigators Association**

Good Afternoon Senate and Assembly members.

My name is Christopher M. Quick, I am an Investigator with the New York State Police and serve as the President of the New York State Police Investigators Association (NYSPIA). NYSPIA represents 1104 State Police Senior Investigators and Investigators that are strategically located throughout New York State. These Senior Investigators and Investigators are assigned to stations or special details and are assigned to the New York State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation or more commonly referred to as the BCI. The Senior Investigators and Investigators who investigate serious crimes are commonly known as the back room Investigators. Their offices are generally located in the back of the State Police barracks where they investigate crimes that include:

- Larcenies
- Robberies
- Burglaries
- Identity Theft
- Sex Crimes
- Homicides

The BCI Members in the special details work in sensitive assignments dealing with:

- Counter Terrorism
- Forensic Investigations
- Narcotics
- Auto Theft
- Dignitary Protection
- Special Investigations
- Gaming
- Computer Crimes

The New York State Police is made up of highly qualified candidates that go through academic testing, rigorous physical testing and extensive background checks that include a polygraph examination. The BCI is responsible for applicant background investigations and polygraph exams. It is common to examine 2000 applicants in order to acquire 200 candidates for the State Police Academy. After one is accepted to attend the Academy, testing continues throughout the 6-month Academy. Well trained, educated, courteous, compassionate and respectful are some qualities exemplified by a Trooper. BCI

Members are then chosen from this elite pool of candidates after they have demonstrated, through their work as a Trooper, that they are truly the best of the best.

This year, the New York State Police will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as New York State's premier law enforcement agency. On March 20, 1917, the Wells-Mills Bill was passed by the Senate and Assembly which appropriated \$500,000 to establish the Department of State Police. Colonel George F. Chandler was appointed by Governor Whitman to lead the newly formed Department of State Police. Colonel Chandler was a Surgeon and a Military Officer, and with great pride he personally chose the first 237 Members of the New York State Police. On April 11, 1917 police training began at the National Guard Camp in Manlius, N.Y. Colonel Chandler re-named the training grounds as Camp Newayo, in honor of Miss Moyca Newell and Miss Katherine Mayo who were responsible for starting the movement to establish a State Police Force that would protect the public in rural areas of New York State. Colonel Chandler also chose to name his police officers as New York State Troopers. Over the years, Troopers became experienced in patrolling communities and investigating all types of crimes. Some of the more serious criminal investigations needed direct attention which resulted in seasoned Troopers staying on the cases and investigating until completion.

On May 4, 1935, the Bureau of Criminal Investigations was established and has grown to include many specialized units that focus on different types of crimes in this fast paced ever changing world. Since 1917 we have witnessed tremendous advances in technology, transportation, electronics and communications that contribute to multiple avenues to conduct crime and terrorism resulting in the need for specialized units. The ever evolving need for police protection has resulted in the formation of new and cutting edge BCI Units such as the Forensic Identification Unit, Joint Terrorist Task Force, Sexual Assault Unit, Special Investigations Unit, Violent Felony Warrant Unit, Community Narcotics Unit, Drug Enforce Task Force, Narcotic Enforcement Unit, Computer Crimes Unit, Gaming Unit, Financial Crimes Unit, Gang Investigation Unit, Major Crimes, Border Intelligence Unit, Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement ("CALEA") Intercept Unit, Child Abuse Unit, Bias Crimes Unit and the New York State Intelligence Center.

Many of our BCI Members act in undercover capacities. The Investigators often wear typical street clothes to blend into the communities in which they work. Whether they are in the field performing surveillance, conducting drug or counterterrorism investigations or following a target through traffic, the identity of their vehicle to be undercover is just as important as the Investigator playing the role of an undercover. They simply cannot operate a typical fleet type vehicle because it increases their chances of being identified as "Police" and jeopardizes their safety and the investigation. It is common for criminals to familiarize themselves with the types of vehicles Police typically utilize and they conduct their own surveillance while they are operating in their criminal enterprise operations. We continue to ask that the Division of Budget consider a pilot program of leasing vehicles for special details. A leased vehicle will afford the Division of State Police many more choices of diverse makes and models non-typical of police fleet vehicles. The leases would be cheaper than buying and owning a new vehicle, cheaper on maintenance (just oil changes, tire and maybe brakes) and turning the vehicle around before hitting the high mileage that brings safety concerns and high cost repairs into question.

Last year when I addressed the members of the Public Protection Hearing Board I expressed my concerns for the BCI members that were commonly driving high mileage vehicles and the lack of any new BCI vehicles being purchased between 2009 -2012. You were made aware and became concerned enough to appropriate adequate funding for the purchase of new vehicles last year and this year to replace the fleet. It appears that the purchase and replacement is reasonable as planned. Your attention to this matter is sincerely appreciated.

As stated before, the BCI is the undercover unit of the New York State Police and often wear attire to blend into their work environment. Backroom Investigators are commanded to wear business attire daily. Recently Superintendent George Beach II authorized a Class B Uniform designed to be worn by Division members when certain types of work demand a uniform presence. In the past Investigators have responded to natural disasters such as Hurricanes Sandy and Irene, the Matt/Sweat manhunt (Adirondacks), the Ralph Phillips manhunt (western New York) and the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Other examples are organized searches for missing people, collection of evidence and training. In the past, an Investigator would wear what he had worn to work that day, whether it be a suit and a tie or jeans and sneakers, the Investigator would regardless of attire respond when called. The uniform design is a blue cargo type work pant and blue shirt marked with State Police identification. It is important for the Investigators to be recognized as Law Enforcement Officers on these types of calls to duty. It is important to the Investigator for safety reasons and important to the Public so that the members of the State Police are easily recognized. The cost to outfit one Investigator with two sets of Class B uniforms would be \$250.96. Approximately \$300,000 would need to be appropriated to adequately disperse these uniforms to the BCI members.

Manpower in the BCI has modestly increased this past year. The membership has grown to 1,104 from 1,040 last year. We are still a distance off of the BCI high of 1,300 and the Superintendent's need for Investigators.

Terrorism in the United States of America continues to be on the rise. In order to thwart terrorist attacks on the public, counterterrorism efforts are a priority in these ever changing times we live in. When an act of terrorism is successful, it strengthens the terrorists' confidence giving them motivation and causes greater public fear. Unfortunately, there are times when uncovering a terrorist plot is like finding a needle in the haystack. To help us in our war on terrorism even more attention needs to be dedicated to gathering intelligence, monitoring the potential terrorists and taking action by either preventing the terrorist acts or eradicating the terrorist lone wolf or cell groups. The men and women of the BCI will continue to be involved on the front line of these counter terrorism initiatives. We need the tools and equipment to protect the public and themselves in this war on terrorism.

Governor Cuomo recognizes the threat of Terrorism and last year implemented a dedicated uniform Trooper presence in New York City. Governor Cuomo identified precise locations vulnerable to a terrorist attack. The Governor first concentrated on the security of the mass transit systems by having Troopers ride the trains and be vigilant at the train stations. The Governor's next step was to permanently assign Troopers to NYC, continuing with the aforementioned actions and progressing to special street patrols in his continuing efforts to make the people of New York safe and secure. This

year as the rise of domestic terrorism continues the Governor has tasked the State Police with assisting the Port Authority patrolling and securing John F. Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports and also securing the Bridges and Tunnels of NYC. Approximately 160,000 people travel in and out of John F. Kennedy daily and half as many through LaGuardia. Large masses of travelers make these airport environments rich for a possible terrorist attack prior to any security checks performed by the Transportation Security Administration. The presence of Troopers in the airports requires additional Investigators whose duties will include any necessary investigations, gathering intelligence and a liaison to the Port Authority and Joint Terrorist Task Force. It is important that Investigator manpower be increased in NYC to complement the Uniform presence in those areas.

Superintendent George Beach II continues to request Recruit Basic School classes at the State Police Academy in order to bolster the strengths of the Division and account for retirements. Although we did have a spurt of classes recently, more needs to be done to address the attrition rate. The classes that have graduated have added to the number of Troopers in the field, primarily to Troop NYC, but these additions are still failing to keep up with the attrition rate of the Division. New York State is ranked fourth in terms of population. Over 19.8 million people reside in this Great State. The population has grown by more than a half a million people in the last decade. As Governor Cuomo continues to encourage growth and job creation in New York State, we must be able to ensure the safety of its residents and visitors alike. The only way to do that is to make sure we have the proper staffing levels for law enforcement.

In closing, we are calling on you to ensure our Investigators are safe, as well as the public by adequately funding the Division of State Police to increase the number of BCI Investigators, allow for the purchase of unmarked vehicles, Class B uniforms and other necessary safety equipment as well as funding new and regular academy classes so we can accomplish our core mission of protecting and serving the people of this great state. Action is needed to continuously train new Troopers in the Academy in order to re-build the ranks of our members who face greater threats with decreasing numbers in the field.

These issues I have discussed with you today are important to the citizens of New York and our members of the New York State Police Investigators Association along with all of the members of the Division of State Police. I would like to thank all of you for the opportunity to allow me to testify here today. I know you have heard an abundant amount of testimony from others today and at this time I welcome any questions that you may have for me.