



# New York State Police Investigators Association



I.U.P.A – Local 4 AFL-CIO

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Good afternoon Senate and Assembly members. My name is Tim Dymond, and I am a Senior Investigator with the New York State Police. I am the elected President of the New York State Police Investigators Association (NYSPIA) which represents approximately 1100 State Police Senior Investigators and Investigators, strategically assigned throughout New York State. Our members are appointed to the Bureau of Criminal Investigations or BCI which is the plainclothes detective branch of the New York State Police. They handle felony level cases in every county across the state. These cases include, but are not limited to: murders, rape, robberies, burglaries, kidnappings and human trafficking. Our members are also assigned to highly specialized Details such as counterterrorism, gang and undercover narcotics units, forensic unit, dignitary protection, special investigations unit and cyber crimes.

Each one of our members was originally hired as uniform Troopers in New York State. The hiring process to become a NY State Trooper is grueling and competitive which is one of the reasons the New York State Police is one of the premier Law Enforcement agencies in this great country. NYSPIA's members are hand-selected from among these highly trained Uniformed Troopers and represent the very best our agency has to offer. Their performance must stand out amongst their peers and they must demonstrate the intelligence and maturity to investigate the complex crimes mentioned above.

The New York State Police, along with every other police agency in the country, are dealing with historic policy changes and a job expectation that seemingly changes by the day. Our members have displayed a strength, resilience and compassion that I am incredibly proud of through what has been the most difficult of times for Law Enforcement officers nationwide. We, as an agency, have proven to be highly adaptable to the rush of current Law Enforcement reforms and continue to take a leadership role in the law enforcement community, while providing the highest quality law enforcement services to the citizens of New York State. All of this, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. To continue this service, I have detailed a few items that deserve consideration in the pending budget.

Our highest priority is the replacement of retiring members within our ranks. We, like most Law Enforcement agencies, are losing members to retirement at a breakneck pace. Equipment, policies, and procedures are ineffective without the members necessary to implement them. We have lost roughly 20% of our Senior Investigators statewide to retirement and their positions have been filled by "acting Senior Investigators". The acting Senior Investigators have been pulled from their previous



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Investigator assignments and have not been backfilled causing significant holes in investigative details across the State. The need for a new class of NY State Troopers has reached a critical point. Nearly every Specialized Detail and Backroom in the State is running at a reduced level while the workload has increased exponentially due, in part, to the Discovery and Bail reforms. We recognize and appreciate the incredible financial hardship the Covid-19 pandemic has caused for the entire State. Tax revenues are down and deficits have grown. In previous years we have come to you to expand our membership to take on additional tasks. This year we simply ask that you help us replenish the ranks necessary to keep all New Yorkers safe. A new recruit class will allow the Division of State Police to have the ability to fill our BCI ranks as these new Troopers assume their duties.

Each year the automobile fleet of the New York State Police has been discussed in budget testimony. We want to maintain a fleet that is safe as well as operationally functional for our membership. I am happy to report that this issue has seen significant progress over the last several years thanks to the Legislature's commitment to addressing the problem. The fleet is younger than in years past and we have been able to roll out a more diverse line of vehicles for our members working in sensitive undercover Details. Prior to my election as President of NYSPIA I worked as a Senior Investigator in the Violent Gang and Narcotics Enforcement Team. I can tell you first hand that the work that the Legislature has done, in conjunction with Division, has made our undercover members safer in the field. For that, I personally thank you. We sincerely hope to maintain this trend by continuing to replace and diversify our fleet in the coming years. Our confidence that the vehicle is safe and adequate for our many daily challenges is of the utmost importance.

Every member of NYSPIA carries a Division-issued Glock .45 caliber handgun. This weapon has proven to be highly functional and effective when it has been called upon for most of our membership. However, it is not a tactically sound choice for members operating in an undercover capacity. We have roughly 300 members working in an undercover capacity throughout the State of New York, from Plattsburgh to the tip of Long Island. For undercover members the Division issued .45 caliber handgun is not functional as it is bulky and not easily concealed. The Division issued holster these members are trained on is one that is easily identifiable as a police holster and one that wouldn't be found on drug traffickers or gang members, who our members are portraying as undercover officers. These weapons would help our undercover members operate more safely and effectively during day-to-day operations. Our undercover members, while doing some of the most dangerous work Law Enforcement has to offer, deserve operationally functional equipment. We are asking the Legislature for your support in the purchase of smaller, more compact handguns



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which are more suitable for concealment during undercover operations at an estimated cost of \$150,000.00.

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Our organization recognizes the State's desire to implement new policies and programs in an attempt to address the projected 2021 multi-billion dollar deficit. The Governor has proposed the legalization of adult-use cannabis and the implementation of a mobile sports betting program. While these issues will have fiscal, social, and cultural impacts, we are here to solely discuss the concerns regarding public protection.

The legalization of adult-use marijuana is a monumental change in NYS law and policy. Our training and resources will need to be vastly altered if the NYS Legislature and Governor Cuomo choose to codify this concept. The impact on law enforcement must be properly anticipated in order to continue the high level of public safety that our citizens have rightly come to appreciate and expect.

Certain law enforcement resources must be increased while others must be replaced altogether. For my members, who investigate felony level crimes, we will be tasked with investigations into the ever-expanding black market. Organized crime will look to provide marijuana users with an opportunity to possess marijuana while circumventing the tax component that makes this a budgetary issue. We will need additional training and surveillance equipment to find and bring to justice those that wish to profit by stealing tax dollars from the State.

Similarly, a plan must be in place to address concerns arising from the creation of a mobile sports betting program. Investigations arising out of mobile sports gambling will require specializing investigations. Cyber-security, background checks, and money laundering cases will all require law enforcement attention as the criminal element attempts to take advantage of this initiative. As our members possess law enforcement powers across every jurisdiction of this State, we stand ready and capable of leading these investigations while partnering with our federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to protect the integrity of this emerging program.

We cannot simply point to the potential positive impacts of these new laws without preparing for the negative consequences brought about by the criminal element in society. We urge the Legislature, in conjunction with the Governor, to set aside a small percentage of the annual revenue generated from these programs to properly fund public safety. Maintaining public confidence in these programs which will generate tax dollars that will flow back to the community is imperative for long-term success. Providing the necessary funding to the law enforcement community to accomplish that task is a wise investment in the future of our State.



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Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to bring these important issues to your attention on behalf of my membership. Law Enforcement reform is the leading discussion topic across the country. As the reforms are implemented there is no question the New York State Police will be looked upon to lead the charge professionally and respectfully. Your assistance with the budget concerns mentioned today will help us to maintain the highest level of professionalism we have all come to expect from the New York State Police. I am confident that you will share the same concerns that we hold today while making decisions related to the NYS Budget.