

**Testimony of Kevin P. Bruen
Acting Superintendent of State Police
Before the Legislative Fiscal Committees
On the FY 2021-2022 Executive Budget
Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

Thank you, Chairs KRUEGER and WEINSTEIN, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee, for the opportunity to discuss Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget for the Division of State Police. I am Kevin P. Bruen, Acting Superintendent of the New York State Police. I have served the agency in various capacities for over 17 years and as the Acting Superintendent since November 2020. I am truly honored to lead the dedicated sworn and civilian members of our great agency.

I would also like to thank the Legislature for recognizing our critical mission – to protect and serve all New Yorkers. Your support has enabled the State Police to earn its reputation as one of the top law enforcement agencies in the nation.

For more than 100 years, the State Police has consistently provided a high level of professional public service. We learn and adapt to the needs of a constantly changing society, and we strive for continuous improvement in every aspect of our work.

Our mission priorities include improving highway safety; providing professional police services and investigative support; detecting and preventing terrorism; and preparing for and responding to emergencies and disasters.

2020 brought several challenges to New York, none more so than the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud that our Troopers have worked continuously for the people of this State as we have played and continue to play a significant role in the State's response, including the transport of thousands of test samples from across the State to the Wadsworth Laboratory in Albany; assisting in establishing, operating and securing State testing and vaccination sites; and supporting other state and local agencies in enforcement operations to help stem the spread of the virus.

As you know, the State Police is unique as we are the only full service New York law enforcement agency with statewide jurisdiction. In response to emergencies or natural disasters, the State Police has the ability to deploy large numbers of professionally trained police officers throughout the State and beyond on short notice. For instance, last summer, during the protests following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, our Troopers were deployed throughout New York at the request of numerous local and city police agencies to assist with efforts to ensure public safety.

Over the past year, the Governor and the Legislature have enacted several police reforms, including a new body-worn camera program directed at the State Police. Since its passage in June, we worked diligently to implement this program.

The Governor, and the State Police, recognize the dynamic nature of terrorism and extremism of all types around the world and domestically. Our role in the State's counter-terrorism efforts help provide a wide range of initiatives and capabilities enabling New York to remain one of the safest states in the country.

New York City remains a top terrorist target, and our expanded presence in the city -- primarily at mass transit hubs, and bridge and tunnel crossings -- has enhanced the collective efforts of the State and our partner agencies to detect, deter and respond to terrorism.

Disaster preparedness is a top priority of the Governor, and we continue to partner with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to improve response readiness. This partnership has enabled the State Police to better coordinate with state agencies and provide support to local communities following significant events.

Illegal drug use, in particular the availability of heroin, opioids and synthetic drugs such as fentanyl, along with the toll they inflict, remains a critical public safety issue. Building on the resources and training provided over the past few years, the State Police will continue to aggressively investigate drug-related offenses, particularly criminal trafficking, and assist local police agencies with their investigations whenever requested.

Our highest priority continues to be the safety of the public and our Troopers who protect them. With your support, the Executive Budget continues to provide our Troopers with the necessary equipment, training and other valuable resources to achieve the best levels of safety as they carry out their duties.

Again, I am honored and exceedingly privileged to represent the nearly 6,000 dedicated men and women of the Division of State Police that serve and protect the people of this great State. They do so selflessly, with tremendous pride and at times with great personal sacrifice.

I thank you for your support of the State Police and for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. I welcome any questions you may have.