

Testimony of Chris Fiore
Deputy Superintendent – Administration, State Police
Before the Legislative Fiscal Committees
On the FY 2019-2020 Executive Budget
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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 Chris Fiore, Deputy Superintendent – Administration. I have served as a Trooper for more than 29 years, and my prior assignment was First Deputy Superintendent.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Legislature for recognizing our agency's critical mission and for your ongoing support of the New York State Police. Your unwavering support enables the State Police to continue to be one of the leading law enforcement agencies in the nation.

For more than a century, the State Police has consistently provided professional public service through its core missions while adapting our priorities to evolving societal needs. We strive for continuous improvement in every aspect of our public service.

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

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

Nonetheless, New York City remains the number one terrorist target in the world. Our increased presence in New York City – particularly as it relates to mass transportation hubs and bridge and tunnel crossings – has enhanced efforts to detect and deter terrorism, as well as to build and maintain the capability to respond to a terrorist attack. This mission has enhanced the counter-terrorism efforts of our agency, as well as those of our partner agencies in the metropolitan area.

Our highest priority continues to be the safety of the public and our Troopers who protect them. Toward that end, the Executive Budget provides our Troopers with the necessary equipment, training and other valuable resources to achieve the best levels of safety in the performance of their duties. During the past year, with your support, we outfitted our members with new Glock firearms and associated equipment including weapon-mounted lights and new patrol rifles and Tasers, as well as necessary equipment for our Special Operations Response Team, K-9 Unit, Bomb Disposal Unit and Underwater Recovery Team. In 2019, we will conduct two Academy classes to meet the current and future needs of the State Police. These new Troopers will allow the agency to perform our mission priorities while ensuring the professional law enforcement response that New Yorkers deserve.

The State Police is unique as the only law enforcement agency within New York with the ability to deploy large numbers of professionally trained police officers anywhere within the State and beyond, on short notice, in response to emergencies or natural disasters. In addition to our traditional investigative law enforcement responses, we continue our partnership with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services' Office of Emergency Management to enhance disaster preparedness and 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, and its impacts, plague our nation and the citizens of New York. The availability of heroin, opioids and synthetic drugs such as fentanyl, along with the toll they inflict upon the abuser and their families, remains a critical public safety issue. Building on the resources and training provided over the past few years, the State Police will aggressively investigate drug-related offenses, particularly criminal trafficking, and assist local police agencies with their investigations whenever requested.

Gang activity and related violence also remains a critical public safety concern. The State Police remain committed to disrupting gang activity, particularly the violent crime associated with the MS-13 gang. Our members remain actively engaged with local police partners on Long Island to combat MS-13 and counter its scourge on our neighborhoods. Across the state, our Troopers and Investigators also continue their partnership with large counties and cities through the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) initiative.

Lastly, New Yorkers expect effective public service from a stable, professional and adequately resourced State Police. I am proud to say that New Yorkers can be confident that 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 agency as we move forward in our second century of service to the public in this great state.

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.