

2022-2023 BUDGET REQUEST
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

STATEMENT TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 1, 2022



Good morning Chairman Saylor, Chairman Bradford, and members of the House Appropriations Committee. I am Colonel Robert Evanchick, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

Before I begin, I would ask us all to remember, with reverence, the 100 members of the Pennsylvania State Police who made the ultimate sacrifice over the course of our 117-year history. These line-of-duty deaths represent PSP's legacy of service to this Commonwealth and the citizens it serves.

With me today are the Deputy Commissioner of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Kristal Turner-Childs; Acting Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Major Jeremy Richard; and Acting Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Professional Responsibility, Major William Bowen.

We are appreciative of Governor Wolf, his staff, and members of the General Assembly for their unwavering commitment to public safety and ongoing support of PSP operations.

PSP patrols 82 percent of the land area and 61 percent of the Commonwealth's highways, including all of its interstates and Turnpike system. In 2021, our Troopers investigated 74,148 crashes and made 19,256 arrests for DUI. Additionally, our commitment to highway safety was demonstrated by the issuance of 457,453 traffic

citations to individuals for violations such as those related to distracted driving and speeding, along with the inspection of 65,846 commercial motor vehicles in 2021.

In addition to highway patrol functions, we provide full-time or part-time police protection to 1,722, or 67 percent, of the Commonwealth's 2,560 municipalities, which do not have their own 24-hour police coverage.

PSP also delivers specialized services to all municipal police agencies. Our Bureau of Forensic Services provides DNA analysis, drug identification, and latent fingerprint examination of evidence submitted by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies at our seven regional crime laboratories. Our Computer Crime Unit is dedicated to the investigation of crimes such as child pornography and identity theft and conducts the forensic analysis of digital evidence submitted by these same agencies.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the members of this Committee and the General Assembly for their diligent work in recognizing and supporting our fiscal requirements. We look forward to working with the Governor's Office and General Assembly to identify a sustainable funding source for the PSP as we continue to reduce our reliance on the Motor License Fund.

Since we last met, PSP has moved forward with new initiatives and enhanced existing programs designed to provide the citizens of this Commonwealth with the superior police services they deserve.

For example, in 2020, PSP created the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) to interact with citizens and organizations throughout the Commonwealth. The Community Affairs Section within OCE works with community leaders, non-profits, legislators, and other law enforcement agencies to strengthen relationships within our communities. The Heritage Affairs Section of OCE trains department personnel as well as employees of other federal, state, and local agencies. Heritage Affairs maintains community relationships, responds to incidents of civil unrest, and responds to hate and bias related crimes.

For many years, the Pennsylvania State Police has been a leader within the law enforcement community and continues its forward-thinking approach toward contemporary issues. The PSP along with its federal and interagency partners are working to strengthen our cybersecurity capabilities and reduce vulnerabilities, while giving due consideration to efficiency measures. The PSP looks forward to playing a leading role in this domain by continuing to establish networks of trusted partners to improve the Commonwealth's cybersecurity posture.

I am pleased to report that the new PSP Academy is scheduled to break ground this fall. The support provided by this committee will ensure Pennsylvania State Troopers continue to be the best trained and most professional law enforcement officers in the country. Additionally, we envision the new Academy becoming a training hub for many of the Commonwealth's law enforcement agencies.

Governor Wolf has proposed a budget which funds 2 Cadet classes and will enable the PSP to graduate approximately 280 Troopers from our Academy this fiscal year. Additionally, this budget continues to assist in the funding of critical programs and will help PSP develop technological solutions for new and existing recording platforms. To that end, PSP is in the process of evaluating Mobile Video Recording (MVR) replacements and a Body-Worn Camera (BWC) solution. The PSP is a staunch advocate of transparency and has been working for years to see a BWC capability come to fruition. The PSP is on the verge of finally achieving this long overdue and momentous goal.

In further support of our transparency initiatives we have reinitiated contact data reporting. The PSP collection efforts in this calendar year will provide critical data subject to an independent analysis by the University of Cincinnati Research Institute. This partnership will serve to enhance the public's trust and confidence in the PSP.

I cannot stress enough how crucial it is to adequately fund the PSP. Since our budget is primarily driven by personnel costs, our only ability to affect meaningful cuts in operating costs would result in the cancellation of future Cadet classes and a fundamental change to our business model. Should that occur, the PSP's ability to provide the citizens of this great Commonwealth with the quality of service they deserve, and have come to expect, would be negatively impacted.

In conclusion, I am proud of the members, staff, and partners of the Pennsylvania State Police as they continue to serve the citizens and visitors of this Commonwealth with dedication and honor regardless of circumstances.

Thank you for allowing me to address your Committee. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.