

2020-2021 BUDGET REQUEST

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

STATEMENT TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 20, 2020



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

Before I continue, I would like to dedicate my testimony today to the memory of Trooper Donald Brackett, who died on duty in May after suffering from a medical emergency and in honor of Corporal Adam Kirk, who was shot in the line of duty in December and is expected to make a full recovery. Additionally, I would ask us all to remember with reverence the 98 Members of the Pennsylvania State Police who made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives in the line of duty in service to the Commonwealth over the span of our 114-year history.

With me today are the Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Lieutenant Colonel Scott Price; the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Professional Responsibility, Major Christopher Paris; and the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Staff, Major Maynard Gray.

We are grateful to Governor Wolf and members of the General Assembly for their steadfast commitment to public safety and ardent support of PSP operations. Furthermore, I would also like to thank the citizens of Pennsylvania for their resolute support of the PSP.

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 2019, our Troopers investigated 81,732 crashes and made 22,129 arrests for

DUI. Additionally, our commitment to highway safety is demonstrated by the issuance of 650,854 traffic citations to individuals for violations such as those related to distracted driving or speeding and the 83,381 commercial motor vehicle inspections that were conducted in 2019.

In addition to highway patrol, we provide full-time or part-time police protection to 1,725, 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 currently at no cost. Our Computer Crime Unit is dedicated to the investigation of crimes such as child pornography or identity theft and conducts the forensic analysis of digital evidence submitted by federal, state, and

local law enforcement agencies. Our Bureau of Forensic Services provides drug identification, DNA analysis, and latent fingerprint examination to the same entities at our seven regional crime laboratories.

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. During last year's budget process, we were asked for our input on ways to generate revenue and to consider developing an alternative to previous models aimed at closing the funding gap caused by a legislated decrease in reliance on Motor License Funds. We took this challenge seriously and formed an internal workgroup to examine areas in which legislation may provide PSP with additional funding.

Our workgroup developed a fair and comprehensive fee model we believe accurately reflects the services we provide to the citizens of Pennsylvania, regardless of whether they reside in a rural or urban community. By utilizing the cost to run each station, our model is incident-based insofar as it is founded upon the design of our existing staffing allocation formula. Our proposal takes into consideration population, median income, and level of police coverage for each community. These factors have been topics of previous legislative discussions. Where our model differs from past plans is that is that our proposal would be assessed per capita for every municipality in the Commonwealth. We believe this alternative is an equitable solution as our services are provided to everyone, regardless of the level of municipal police coverage. Our proposal generates an estimated \$136 million dollars and is

flexible enough to be able to address future fiscal requirements.

Some areas of additional funding sources we feel may merit additional consideration are an increase in PICS fees to make it self-sufficient, the addition of a fee for fingerprint submissions to maintain and upgrade our AFIS system, and fees applied to automobile insurance policies, vehicle inspections, and rental vehicle agreements.

PSP continues to experience increased demands for our services through enacted legislation, sometimes without additional funding included. For example, Act 147 of 2018 provided for the collection of DNA from individuals convicted in Pennsylvania of any felony and selected misdemeanors. This Act also expanded post-conviction

relief for individuals. As a result, PSP estimates our scientists will analyze approximately 40,000 additional samples annually without any funding included in the legislation for personnel or equipment.

Over the past year, PSP has moved forward with new initiatives and enhanced existing programs designed to provide the citizens of this great Commonwealth with the superior police services they deserve.

For example, in 2019, PSP distributed Mobile IDs, or hand-held biometric scanners, to our field installations. These devices give law enforcement the ability to perform a fingerprint-based suspect identification check on site. This has saved time for law enforcement and has increased our Troopers' ability to identify suspected criminals. Last

year, over 6,500 fingerprints were submitted through the use of this technology.

For over a decade, the Pennsylvania State Police has been a leader within the law enforcement community in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting instances of human trafficking. In 2019, Members of our Organized Crime Task force participated in joint investigations with our local and federal law enforcement partners to combat these crimes. Additionally, PSP has provided Human Trafficking instruction to hundreds of law enforcement professionals to assist them with these types of investigations. Furthermore, to better equip the public to recognize indicators and report instances of human trafficking, we provide free training to public and private organizations upon request on the signs and indicators of human trafficking.

Governor Wolf has proposed a budget which will permit us to fund 4 Cadet Classes and send approximately 384 new Troopers through our Academy. Additionally, this budget continues to fund critical programs such as PICS and the P25 Radio System.

I cannot stress enough how crucial it is to adequately fund the PSP. Because our budget is primarily driven by personnel costs, our only ability to affect meaningful cuts in operating costs would result in the necessity to cancel future Cadet Classes and consider a 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 men and women of the Pennsylvania State Police, who continue to serve with the citizens and visitors of this Commonwealth with dedication and honor.

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

