

November 13, 1997

Good Morning

Dear Mr. Chairman & Committee Members,

My name is Paul T. McCommons, President of the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association.

I represent over 4,000 state troopers, and would like to request that the legislature reject any further restrictions on enforcement tools that are presently being considered by the legislature such as limiting the use of unmarked police cars by police officers across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

This proposed restriction is like the farmer who shoots his horse pulling the wagon because the horse could no longer pull it after the farmer overloaded it beyond the capabilities of the horse.

With this legislation it would only further restrict the capabilities of police officers in the use of unmarked vehicles in the enforcement of the Vehicle Code (ie: drag racing, disobeying signs, etc) and Crimes Code in the Commonwealth and, it is not the police officers who are misusing unmarked vehicles, but criminals.

We urge the legislature to turn their focus not on the police agencies that are enforcing the laws, but on the criminals who are committing the acts by increasing penalties and fines for impersonating

a police officer, enforcement officers, or agents of companies.

Another area that has to be looked at is the regulation of citizens being able to purchase police uniforms, equipment, especially red and blue lights. There needs to be a concerted effort in looking at standardizing police agencies uniforms that citizens have the immediate ability to recognize a police officer from a security guard, or an impersonator.

In the majority of the impersonator incidents, the perpetrator used a red or blue light to stop his victim. There needs to be tighter control placed on the sale and use of red and blue lights.

The state police has a policy on the use of red lights in unmarked vehicles and, the Vehicle Code also addresses it, but there should be a universal policy on the use of red and/or blue lights in unmarked vehicles.

On behalf of our membership, I want to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue and I will answer any questions you may have.