

Testimony provided by:

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Pennsylvania State Troopers Association (PSTA)**

Respectfully submitted to:

**Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Judiciary Committee
Hon. Thomas R. Caltagirone, Chairman
Hon. Ron Marsico, Republican Chairman**

February 21,, 2008

I would like to thank Chairman Caltagirone and Chairman Marsico, as well as all members of this committee for your leadership in helping to make Pennsylvania a safer place for our families. Let me also thank you for your support of the law enforcement community, specifically the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association. We appreciate the opportunity to work together with you on issues that are important to the safety and security of 12 million Pennsylvanians.

The PSTA represents more than 4,300 active men and women who have dedicated their lives to proudly serving their neighbors, relatives and communities as Pennsylvania State Troopers.

Prior to addressing House Bill 466, the PSTA wants to make it clear that we believe our county sheriff departments serve an incredibly valuable role in upholding the law in our commonwealth. They are tasked each and every day with maintaining order and safety in our 67 county courthouses. Our court system is the bedrock foundation of an orderly society. That mission is even more important as instances of violence have increased in our courts.

That is why we believe it is more important than ever that our county sheriff departments focus their energy and resources on this mission rather than expand their duties as set forth under House Bill 466.

As for House Bill 466, the PSTA believes more consideration should be given to expanding sheriff department personnel rather than expanding their duties. As I am sure you know a sheriff's department is a daytime force. As a trooper, I can tell you that the state police are often left to handle some of their duties after hours, such as serving protection from abuse orders. With more personnel, our sheriffs would be better equipped to handle the tasks granted to them by statute.

Additionally, the PSTA is concerned that county sheriffs are elected individuals and would be the only law enforcement officials to have no direct oversight if House Bill 466 is enacted. Police chiefs answer to the mayor. Our state police colonel answers to the

governor. Sheriffs would answer to no one. Again, while we have a great deal of respect for sheriffs, we do not believe a special circumstance should exist for one law enforcement official and not others.

With that, let me thank you again for your leadership and the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

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