

2012-2013 BUDGET REQUEST
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE
STATEMENT TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
MARCH 6, 2012



Presented By
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Commissioner
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Good morning Chairman Adolph and members of the House Appropriations Committee. I am Colonel Frank Noonan, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police. With me today are Deputy Commissioner of Staff Scott Snyder; Deputy Commissioner of Operations George Bivens; Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Professional Responsibility Kenneth Hill; and the Director of the Fiscal Division, Mr. Scott Frederick.

Currently, the State Police patrols 83% of the land area and 63% of the Commonwealth's highways, including all of the interstates. We provide full-time or part-time police protection to nearly 70% of Pennsylvania's municipalities, comprising 27% of the population. Unfortunately, declining revenues have forced many municipalities to reduce or even discontinue local police services requiring the State Police to step in and fill the void.

Meanwhile, State Police ranks continue to shrink. On average, 150 to 160 troopers retire each year. As of March 2, 2012, the State Police had 357 enlisted vacancies, and the numbers are climbing. By the time the current collective bargaining contract expires this year, over 1,000 troopers will be eligible to retire. I want to thank Governor Corbett for his generous support of 115 State Police Cadets to begin training in June of this year.

Despite being stretched thin, our troopers are doing a great job. Last year, troopers made 73,297 criminal arrests and issued 575,375 traffic citations. In 2011, troopers made 17,455 DUI arrests statewide, including 5,211 arrests for driving under the influence of drugs. Although the number of DUI-related crashes increased slightly last year, the number of DUI-related crash fatalities decreased by more than 12 percent.

Troopers in the field receive invaluable support from entities within the Department. One prime example is the Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center, or PaCIC, which we created in 2003 to provide round-the-clock information and intelligence to all law enforcement professionals – state, federal, and local. During 2011, our professional analysts processed 16,364 requests for information. The center also received 617 terrorism tips, which were all investigated by our tactical intelligence task forces.

In addition to patrolling streets and solving crimes, the Pennsylvania State Police provides a variety of other services to our citizens and other law enforcement agencies.

To cite a few examples, the Bureau of Records and Identification operates as the central repository for criminal history record information in Pennsylvania. In 2011, we received 109,582 requests for criminal history records through the mail and another 1,097,910 requests over the internet.

In addition, 739,682 background checks were conducted through the Pennsylvania Instant Check System, known as PICS, which allows firearms dealers and sheriffs to determine whether a person can legally obtain or possess a firearm. In addition to checking a person's criminal history, PICS queries juvenile and mental health records as well as outstanding warrants. As mandated by statute, we only charge two dollars per check. The Megan's Law Section processed over 23,486 sex offender registrations, verifications, and reported changes last year.

In 2011, the Computer Crime Unit conducted 1,540 investigations and more than 2,903 forensic digital evidence examinations. Further, our laboratory analyzed DNA samples received from 24,441 convicted offenders and 1,556 forensic cases.

The State Police could not carry out these important functions without the necessary technology, like the Computerized Criminal History Record Information database (CCHRI), the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (CLEAN), and the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

The year 2011 was a dangerous year for law enforcement. Nationally, 173 officers were killed — up 13 percent from 153 line-of-duty deaths in 2010. For the first time in 14 years, more officers died from firearms-related incidents than traffic-related incidents. Here in Pennsylvania, three officers and one deputy sheriff were shot and killed in the line-of-duty; my troopers were involved in 13 separate incidents where gunfire was exchanged. Additionally, many troopers put their lives on the line while performing numerous acts of bravery like those during the floods in the fall. They face these risks willingly rather than swerve from the path of duty.

In conclusion, I am proud of the men and women of the State Police, who continue to serve with dedication and integrity under difficult circumstances. Thank you for allowing me to address your committee. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.