

Good morning Chairman Marsico, Chairman Pippy, and members of the House Judiciary and Senate Law and Justice Committees. I am Colonel Frank Noonan, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police. With me today are Deputy Commissioner of Operations George Bivens; Deputy Commissioner of Staff Scott Snyder; and Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Professional Responsibility Kenneth Hill. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today and discuss some of the most pressing needs of our agency.

As many of you are aware, Governor Pennypacker and members of the General Assembly had the vision to create the "Department of the State Police," by Act 227 of 1905, to curb the challenges of growing lawlessness and labor unrest in the Commonwealth at that time. The historic relationship with the legislature has been critical to our ability to meet the challenges of our state, a relationship I value as my predecessors have before me. As you know, we've come a long way since that initial complement of 228 **men**.

Currently, the State Police patrols 83 percent of the land area and 63 percent of the Commonwealth's highways, including all of the interstates. We provide full-time or part-time police protection to nearly 70 percent of Pennsylvania's municipalities, comprising 27 percent of the population. Despite being stretched thin, last year, Troopers made over 70,000 criminal arrests and issued over 500,000 traffic citations. In 2011, Troopers made over 17,000 DUI arrests statewide, including over 5,200 arrests for driving under the influence of drugs. Historically, Troopers have consistently "gotten the job done" in times of need, like during the floods last fall, covering the void **left** by disbanded police departments, and assisting full-time police departments with unique investigations and large, complex events. We serve on federal task forces to fight terrorism, interstate drug smuggling, and illegal gun trafficking. We maintain the Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center, state crime laboratory, Megan's Law Section, and the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network. In short, we are one of the largest, most unique providers of **police services** in the country.

The mission of law enforcement remains a dangerous one. Nationally, in 2011, 173 officers were killed – up 13 percent from 2010. For the first time in 14 years, more

officers died from firearms-related incidents than traffic-related incidents. Here in Pennsylvania, three police 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, and our highly trained Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) was called into service over 160 times.

This year, on March 6, Trooper Marshall Kephart of Troop T was dispatched to a crash in the eastbound lanes of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Brush Creek Township, Fulton County. Upon his arrival, there was a passenger car sitting in the median and a tractor trailer on the south berm. As Trooper Kephart exited his vehicle, the occupant of the passenger car inexplicably came toward him with two large aggressive **Rottweilers** on retractable leashes. Despite being directed to put the dogs in the car, the subject extended the leashes **allowing** the dogs to converge on the Trooper. Next, the subject began to assault Trooper Kephart with a four cell metal flashlight that he retrieved from his vehicle. The Trooper was forced to fire his weapon to thwart the attack and disperse the dogs. The subject died at the scene, but thankfully, Trooper Kephart survived, despite requiring 36 staples in his head from the injuries he sustained during the attack.

Just **two** weeks ago, members from Troop L, along with the SERT, responded to a residence in North **Annville** Township, Lebanon County, to serve an emergency mental health commitment on a 57 year-old male. The subject's family was concerned with his increasingly erratic behavior and continued threats to kill members of PSP. They reported him to be arming himself heavily and setting "booby traps" within his residence to injure or **kill** any State Trooper who entered.

Troopers utilized a PA system for several hours requesting the subject to peacefully exit the residence. He began shooting at Troopers using multiple weapons, including handguns, small caliber rifles, and a large caliber scoped rifle. He remained concealed within the residence for an extended period until SERT members made entry into the residence. He met them with gunfire from a barricaded position, shooting blindly through a closed door and interior **walls** of the house. One SERT Trooper was struck by a bullet directly in the front of his ballistic helmet at the level of his forehead. The SERT members evacuated the wounded Trooper and the incident continued.

Unfortunately, after several additional hours, the subject was fatally shot as he continued to fire upon Troopers. SERT members again entered the residence and found him to be deceased, but still in possession of numerous weapons, wearing body armor, and with a hand grenade lying **next** to him. Miraculously, the Trooper who was shot in the forehead survived and has no life threatening injuries due to the protection afforded by his ballistic helmet.

Both of these dramatic events, and the aforementioned statistics, highlight the bravery **and** dedication displayed by our Troopers everyday who do not swerve from the path of duty. But, they also highlight the need for a sufficient force, professionally trained and properly equipped with both safety equipment and communications technology.

State Police ranks continue to shrink. On average, 150 to 160 Troopers retire each year. As of March 16, 2012, the State Police had 372 enlisted vacancies and the numbers continue to grow. By the time the current collective bargaining contract expires this year, over 1,000 Troopers will be eligible to retire. I have already made some difficult decisions regarding these circumstances by closing the consolidated dispatch centers to maximize the number of Troopers on the road and simplify communication equipment needs. I am consolidating aviation units **and** considering the consolidation of local barracks and other services; however, I want to thank Governor Corbett for his generous support of 115 State Police Cadets to begin training in June of this year.

I ask that you consider the above circumstances as you deliberate on the difficult budgetary issues ahead. I ask that you think about these circumstances as you contemplate other endeavors like legislation aimed at revenue sharing. I ask that you maintain the vision of the General Assembly since 1905, to meet the challenges of our times and continue to provide only the highest quality police protection to the citizens we serve.

Thank you and I'll be glad to answer any questions that you may have,

