



CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION

Good Evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Senator Prague, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Andrew Matthews, and I am the President of the Connecticut State Police Union and a Sergeant of the Connecticut State Police. As the Union President, I represent approximately 1,028 State Troopers, Sergeants and Master Sergeants. The Connecticut State Police Union membership takes great pride in protecting all Connecticut citizens and visitors. We appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today. We are here today to speak **AGAINST** the budget reductions listed in the **Governor's Bill No. 5014** as they relate to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

**"AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013"**

The State Police Union understands these are difficult financial times and that local, State, and federal agencies are seeking ways to cut expenses. However, when considering cuts, we should pause and consider that the primary goal of government is to preserve life and property. Ensuring there are adequate staffing levels within the State Police, that Troopers receive proper training and that they have reliable and safe equipment to protect the public is critical. **The reality is that when agencies or local governments reduce public safety budgets, it not only increases the potential risk for injuries or deaths, it increases the potential for lawsuits against the State.**

In 2010, prior to the Department of Public Safety's merger with the Departments of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Department of Fire Prevention and Control, and the Police Officers Standards and Training Council, the Department of Public Safety requested a budget of approximately \$151,816,000 for "Personal Services." In the 2011-2012 budget for all three agencies, the budget for "personal services" was \$126,034,999. In fiscal year 2010-2011, the entire State budget was \$19,010,229,152. **Therefore, the State Police budget was (.66%) approximately one half of one percent of the overall State budget. This is a small price to pay for the safety, security, and preservation of life and property.** Bill #5014 now reduces another \$8,595,820 from "personal services," which we believe will affect the vital police services we provide to the public.

Bill #5014 also calls for a reduction of \$2,514,122 for our department's fleet purchases. In years past, once a cruiser reached 100,000 miles the agency replaced the vehicle to ensure reliability for calls for service. Unfortunately, due to the current financial situation, of the 727 patrol cruisers, nearly 166 cruisers are over 100,000 miles, with one at least with 147,285 miles. Of 250 unmarked vehicles, nearly 137 assigned vehicles are over 100,000 miles, with one as high as 211,317 miles. **The State Police fleet is critical to providing public safety.**

Currently, there is another Governor's Bill (No. 32) which is before the Public Safety Committee that would remove the mandate of 1,248 sworn Troopers, increase the voluntary auxiliary program, and requires the Commissioner to submit a staffing report every two years beginning in 2014. The 1,248 mandate became law after the brutal domestic violence murder of Heather Messenger of Chaplin, Connecticut. Mrs. Messenger called the State Police 9-1-1 and requested assistance, but due to the lack of



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proper staffing, it took approximately 18 minutes for a Trooper to arrive. There was public outrage over this incident and as a result, CGS: 29-4 (which mandates 1,248 Troopers) became law with the unanimous support of our legislative leadership. **In 2009, the Connecticut State Police employed 1,283 sworn Troopers. Currently, the State Police has 1,080 sworn Troopers, 168 below the statutory mandate and 203 below our high in 2009.** Any attempt to reduce this mandate would clearly jeopardize public safety and Trooper Safety and we cannot sit in silence and watch this happen; all in an attempt to save money. The citizens expect all elected officials and those of us in law enforcement to protect them. We cannot adequately protect them by reducing the State Police staffing levels and we look forward to speaking about this issue when the bill comes before a public hearing.

There are many expenses incurred by the services provided by the State Police that should not be reduced and need to be adequately funded. They include, but are not limited to, the operation and maintenance of our State Police Helicopter "Trooper One," our Major Crime Squads, Traffic Services, and our Emergency Services Unit. For example, "Trooper One" is a vital service that can be used in locating lost children or adults, conducting surveillance, providing Trooper safety, assisting in the apprehension of criminals, and acts as a deterrent for criminal activity. Our Major Crime Squads investigate homicides, sexual assaults, and bank robberies. The Traffic Services Unit's primary function is to enforce motor vehicle laws on our roadways. Our Emergency Services Unit performs such tasks as bomb identification and disposal, dive team operations, K-9 services, forced entries into homes or buildings, and hostage negotiations. Many local police agencies rely on these various services which would be in jeopardy if funds were reduced or eliminated. In addition to the services that the men and women of the State Police provide, there must be adequate funding for proper training with regard to our State Police Firearms Range and repairing our infrastructure.

In closing, the State Police Union understands these are difficult economic times. **We understand the meaning and purpose of a balanced budget and the need to reduce or eliminate unnecessary spending. However, such reductions should not be made where they negatively impact public safety.** Therefore, the Connecticut State Police Union is offering to meet with any elected official or the Command Staff of the State Police at any time to openly discuss any budgetary issues and find additional ways to save money without jeopardizing public safety.

Based on the foregoing, we respectfully ask this Committee to consider no further reductions to the public safety budget.