



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMISSIONER

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DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION (DESPP) COMMISSIONER

The commissioner is the administrative head and commanding officer of DESPP and the administrative head of the DESPP's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Among other things, he must (1) provide a coordinated program for protecting life and property and responding to emergency management and homeland security issues; (2) enforce commercial motor vehicle laws at weigh stations; and (3) investigate the cause, circumstances, and origins of fires involving property damage, personal injury, or death.

QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEE

Merger Issues

1. One of the arguments for merging the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security was to save money.
 - What savings have been realized thus far?
 - Are you satisfied with how the merger has gone?
 - Is the merger complete?
 - Have there been any unexpected problems? How have they been resolved?
2. How many people does DESPP employ? How does this compare with the number previously employed by DPS and DEMHS?
3. Have you appointed a deputy commissioner to head DEMHS? If not, why?

State Police Staffing

A state Superior Court recently ruled that a state law directing the commissioner to appoint and maintain a minimum of 1,248 state police officers is mandatory.

1. What does DESPP plan to do in light of this ruling?
2. How many police officers does DESPP currently employ? How many are eligible for retirement?
3. When is the next batch of trooper trainees scheduled to graduate? How many trainees are in the class?
4. The governor has proposed eliminating the minimum trooper staffing requirement ([SB 32](#)). If the bill passes, how would you determine staffing levels? How many troopers do you believe the department needs now to operate efficiently?

Minority Hiring Practices

1. The State Police has sometimes been criticized on its minority hiring record and, on a number of occasions, been subject to allegations of racial discrimination.
 - Have you made minority hiring one of your priorities?
 - What goals, if any, have you set to address this issue?
 - How many minorities are on your management team?

Crime Laboratory Issues

The state crime laboratory temporarily lost its accreditation because of a number of problems, including evidence backlogs and staffing issues.

1. What is the status of the lab's work load, backlog, and staffing levels? Have the lab's accreditation problems led to any prisoners contesting their convictions?
2. You recently sent a [letter](#) to all Connecticut law enforcement agencies, with guidelines from the Crime Lab Task Force, limiting submissions to the lab and prioritizing the lab's work. What impact do you think this will have on the criminal justice system? What has been the response from the law enforcement community and prosecutors?

Snow Storm Response

The [Connecticut October 2011 Snowstorm Restoration Report](#) assessed the preparedness, response, and restoration efforts of electric companies, primarily Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P), in connection with the October 2011 snowstorm.

1. The [report](#) found that the state's Natural Disaster Plan and the State Response Framework do not specifically assign responsibilities after a power outage or establish specific procedures for dealing with outages. Has DESPP modified the plan to address this finding?
2. The [report](#) recommended that DESPP review and improve state planning for outages and play a stronger role in guiding and reviewing municipal plans and procedures. How has DESPP addressed this issue?

3. The [report](#) also recommended that DESPP work with CL&P and other utilities to identify and recommend steps to improve radio communications between agencies and field crews involved in restoring power. What progress has the state made in this regard?
4. What other steps is DESPP taking to improve disaster response?

Eyewitness Identification

1. The Eyewitness Identification Task Force recently recommended that police always use sequential line-ups. This requires police to show a witness each person or photo in a line-up individually, rather than at the same time.
 - What do you think of this recommendation?
 - Will the State Police have any problems implementing it?
 - When will implementation occur, if it hasn't already?
2. The task force also recommended that police conduct "double blind" lineups, where the officer administering the line-up does not know the suspect's identity. If this is not practicable, the line-up should be "blind," where the officer administering it may know the suspect but not where he or she is located in the array.
 - What do you think of this recommendation?
 - When do you think "double blind" line-ups will not be practicable?

Online Gambling

1. Some proponents of online gambling suggest that it is not difficult to regulate.
 - What special problems or challenges, if any, has the growth in Internet use presented for the State Police?
 - What special problems, challenges, or law enforcement issues does online gambling present?
 - If the state legalizes online gambling, do you think DESPP has the resources to address these issues?

Racial Profiling

1. How compliant has the State Police been in collecting and reporting traffic stop data to the state, as required by state law?

Red-Light Cameras

The use of cameras to automatically record drivers who run red lights is an increasingly contentious issue. Proponents say the cameras increase safety and deter motorists from running red lights. Opponents raise privacy concerns and argue that the cameras may cause more accidents as drivers stop suddenly and are rear-ended.

1. What is your opinion on the use of red-light cameras?
2. What safeguards would you recommend for programs using red-light cameras?

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