



CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION

Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Andrew Matthews. I am the President of the Connecticut State Police Union, which represents approximately 1,051 Troopers, Sergeants and Master Sergeants. I am also the Chairman of the National Troopers Coalition, which represents nearly 42,000 State Troopers around the country. I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of our membership and IN OPPOSITION OF:

**PROPOSED GOVERNORS BILL NO.6824
CHANGES FOR FUNDING TO THE RESIDENT TROOPER PROGRAM**

The Connecticut State Police Union opposes any increase in cost to the 57 towns that support the Resident Trooper program because it would avoid the legislature's intent to provide the necessary police service to communities that cannot afford the cost of their own organized police force. In the 1960s the State of Connecticut partnered with the small towns to ensure the safety of all citizens of Connecticut regardless of where they reside.

The Connecticut State Police is the primary law enforcement agency in 81 of the State's 169 cities and towns. Currently, 57 towns contract with the State and the State Police for the Resident Trooper Program. The Connecticut State Police Resident Trooper Program has been in existence for 69 years, and has served as a national model for other states. This program provides the additional law enforcement presence in those towns by having a Trooper dedicated to the law enforcement needs of the town. Unfortunately, the local State Police Barracks providing 24 hour daily coverage do not have sufficient minimum patrol staffing to provide these towns the consistent and immediate service they expect and deserve. Notwithstanding, our Resident Troopers oversee the town's daily police operations and are personally invested in their communities.

The Connecticut State Police and its Resident Trooper Program provides the best and most fiscally responsible policing program in Connecticut. Currently, the benefits of the program far outweigh the costs of the program. However, if Governor Malloy's biennial budget is approved in its current form – towns that currently pay 70% of the costs for each Resident Trooper will be forced to pay 100%. The state would no longer contribute 30% of the cost for the Resident Trooper. The proposed Bill is projected to save approximately \$4.6 million in the next two years. Unfortunately, if towns are forced to pay 100% of the cost for their Resident Trooper, some may not be able to afford the program, which would shift the additional workload to the local barracks. The reality is that this measure will actually cost the state more money as towns will no longer contract for a Resident Trooper, thereby leaving the State to pay for 100% of the cost for that same Trooper. Eventually, in order to provide the appropriate police response/services to these towns -- it would require the state to pay for 100% of the additional staffing at the local Barracks.

This proposal is ill-advised and will *jeopardize public safety*. Towns will be forced to choose between their Resident Trooper Program or eliminating other vital services that would compromise public safety in order to pay for their Resident Trooper. Cutting state funding and thereby services to these towns is not appropriate or what the tax payers expect. The state is experiencing severe budget shortfalls, but cutting funding for public safety services will only magnify the problem while creating new ones. Our government is obligated (especially in a State without county government) to maintain the mission of the State Police and the Resident State Trooper Program by continuing to partner with these towns to provide police services.

In closing, we urge you to prevent the proposed change in Resident Trooper funding. Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

February 25, 2015

CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION
Andrew Matthews, Esq. - President

