

**Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2015
Division of Criminal Justice Budget Public Hearing**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is John Bannan. I am here to testify in support of the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) budget as requested by Chief State's Attorney Kane earlier today.

I am a sworn Inspector in the Division of Criminal Justice. I am also president of the Police Inspector's Council of CSEA SEIU Local 2001. I currently represent seventy-one inspectors employed by the Division of Criminal Justice at thirteen Judicial District courthouses across the state and the Chief State's Attorney's Office. DCJ inspectors are some of the most experienced police officers in the State of Connecticut, all having previously served successful careers with other law enforcement agencies before joining the Division. Our duties include:

- responding to major crime scenes to work side by side with local and state police to ensure successful investigations;
- assisting crime victims and witnesses to prepare them for the court process including testifying;
- locating and interviewing suspects;
- protecting those witnesses whose personal safety has been threatened;
- locating witnesses and serving subpoenas for trials; and
- preparing physical evidence for trial presentation.

Additionally, the investigative bureaus and units in the Chief State's Attorney's Office undertake complex, time consuming, and specialized criminal investigations beginning with the initial complaint, interviewing witnesses and victims, obtaining and executing search warrants to seize evidence, preparing arrest warrants and making arrests; and then working the case all the way through the trial process. Other inspectors are assigned to the two shooting task forces now operating in Hartford and New Haven, making our streets safer every day. Basically, Inspectors are the eyes and ears, as well as the arms and legs of Connecticut's prosecutors.

Unfortunately over the past several years, the number of inspectors has dwindled from the low nineties to the present day seventy-one. This despite taking on more and more areas of responsibility. In fact, the entire Division of Criminal Justice, not just inspectors, has done so. The austerity budgets of the last few years have taken an already lean agency and made it downright emaciated. The Division of Criminal Justice has been doing more with less for a very long time. Improving technology, which the DCJ has done, can only achieve finite savings. In some cases the rapidly evolving legal technology actually becomes a budgetary burden.

Every year this legislature passes new bills which the governor signs into law. Many of those laws become the responsibility of the DCJ to prosecute, and in many cases, investigate. Yet the budgetary resources necessary to meet these mandates go unfulfilled.

The unit to which I am assigned, the Statewide Prosecution Bureau in the Chief State's Attorney's Office, now has four inspectors and one supervisory inspector. We investigate and prosecute crimes in the areas of public integrity, elder abuse, environmental crimes, conflicts of interest from other state's attorney's offices, as well as white collar and other financial crimes from all across the state. We also provide investigative support to the Civil Litigation Bureau for Habeas Corpus petitions and the Asset Forfeiture Bureau. At one time these program areas were served by twenty-one inspectors. Now we have five. This is more than a three-quarter or seventy-five percent reduction in personnel. The number of cases has not gone down and their complexity and the time needed to investigate them has increased. Simply do the math: this formula is not sustainable. Further reductions in the budget and personnel will only exacerbate an already untenable situation. And we must never forget the always looming statute of limitations which causes us to triage virtually every investigation in the hope we can do justice for the victims of crime before the calendar runs out.

That is our situation. The Governor's proposed budget financially cuts the Division of Criminal Justice even further, by thirty positions. The requested budget allocation is merely a maintenance budget keeping the Division's status quo of services. The governor has zeroed the allocation for the entire Cold Case/Shooting Task Force Bureau. This bureau has brought peace of mind to the families of murder victims who have waited years for justice. This same unit has achieved remarkable results which have made it far safer for Connecticut citizens to simply walk the streets in two of our largest cities without fear of being shot. I ask you to put a price tag on the peace of mind these initiatives bring us all.

I don't live in a vacuum. Revenue is falling short while expenses are growing. I know this committee has unbelievably difficult financial choices to make and I know every person who appears before this committee has a truly bona fide and sincere need. But, we must remember that without the basic freedom of being able to move about on our streets, in our homes, our businesses and our schools in safety and security, no other normal activities can occur. The Division of Criminal Justice and its employees ensure and provide that safety and security. I therefore respectfully ask this committee to restore the funding levels as requested by Chief State's Attorney Kane and the Division of Criminal Justice so we may continue our important mission.

I wish you well in your deliberations. I thank you for your time and attention.

John Bannan

President, Police Inspector's Council - CSEA SEIU Local 2001