

POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

of the NEW YORK STATE TROOPERS, INC.



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Remarks by NY State Troopers PBA President Thomas H. Mungeer on February 26, 2015 regarding the 2015-2016 Executive Budget

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Members of the Legislature, thank you for allotting me time to present important information on behalf of all New York State Troopers as well as the citizens of this state.

My name is Thomas Mungeer, and I am honored to represent 6,000 active and retired Troopers and State Police Supervisors in my position as President of the New York State Troopers PBA, the labor union representing those dedicated public servants.

This is my sixth year addressing all of you, and this is the sixth year the PBA has taken a strong stance in advocating for the safety of our members. Manpower once again is our number one priority. We are referring to manpower levels of sworn members, the men and women who wear the gray uniform, patrol our highways, and respond to emergencies. Although there has been headway in the past year to replenish our dwindling manpower levels, we are still fighting to regain our footing with adequate staffing while dealing with the specter of attrition that looms ominously every year. If the number of Troopers continues to decrease, there will be serious public safety issues.

We are thankful that Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature have realized the need to resume hiring Troopers to begin to erase the shortfalls created by not having any Academy classes between 2009 and 2012. Despite hiring new Troopers each year including 240 on Sunday, March 1, 2015, we really haven't gained any headway due to retirements.

We are at a tipping point with attrition levels, and it is imperative that the State Police hire at least 100 new Troopers this year in addition to the next incoming class of recruits to offset an anticipated 250 retirements. We must start to move in a positive direction in terms of manpower to dig ourselves out of the proverbial hole created by the 3 ½-year freeze.

Fewer Troopers on the road will endanger not only the public, but also the brave and dedicated Troopers who put their lives on the line each and every day. Being a New York State Trooper is a difficult and dangerous job, as evidenced by the 17 line-of-duty deaths we have incurred over the past decade.

Adequate manpower is imperative, but having the proper tools to adequately and safely protect the citizens of New York also cannot be underscored. The aging fleet of marked patrol vehicles is at an all-time low in terms of effectiveness and reliability. The number of these cars that have been driven over 150,000 miles is alarming. Make no mistake about this: these cars are expected to perform day in and day out at high speeds. The more one drives a vehicle with high mileage, the greater the probability that worn out parts may lead to structural failure. There have been documented instances of axle failures within the State Police fleet. Having adequate manpower to put in the cars is one thing, but giving that Trooper the ability to get to where he or she is needed is another. Someone's life may depend on it.

The reason we became New York State Troopers in the first place was because we care about the safety of you, your friends and family, and the communities across the state. That's why I must speak out about the consequences of not having adequate manpower and proper equipment for sworn members of the New York State Police to properly do their jobs. You must ask yourselves: what price am I willing to pay for the safety of my constituents?