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Testimony of Joseph A. D'Amico
Superintendent of State Police
Before the Legislative Fiscal Committees
On the 2016-2017 Executive Budget
February 4, 2016

Thank you Chairwoman *YOUNG*, Chairman *FARRELL* and distinguished members of the Committees for the opportunity to discuss with you Governor Cuomo's Budget for the Division of State Police.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Legislature for its past support of the State Police. Because of your support, the New York State Police continues to enjoy its well-deserved reputation as one of the leading law enforcement agencies in the nation.

On April 11, 1917, Governor Whitman signed the Wells-Mills Bill into law establishing the State Police. As we approach the agency's 100th Anniversary next year, our role in New York is essentially unchanged to this day:

"It shall be the duty of the State Police to prevent and detect crime and apprehend criminals. They shall also be subject to the call of the Governor and empowered to cooperate with any other department of the State or with local authorities."

And the importance of this original charter is as significant now as it was back then.

Since its inception, the State Police has consistently provided public service through its core missions, adapting mission priorities constantly to societal changes, and we have continually improved these services. Our current mission priorities include reducing the number of deaths, injuries and property damage caused by motor vehicle accidents through vehicle and traffic enforcement and motorist education, providing professional police services to communities and investigative support to departments around the State, engaging in emergency preparedness, planning and response activities and serving a crucial role in the State's counter-terrorism efforts through our collaborative work with Federal, local and other State agencies. Our mission and goals all focus on ensuring the continued safety of the people of New York State.

The Governor continues to dedicate funding to Joint Task Force Empire Shield to enhance efforts to detect and deter terrorism in a time when such acts are constantly a threat to the safety of New Yorkers. As a result, New York remains one of the safest large states in the nation. Using intelligence-based investigative techniques and targeted enforcement, State Troopers have been assigned to potential target locations and with local partners provide greater protection for the public through asset integration strategies. This effort is being permanently implemented in New York City with the new assignment of fifty-five (55) State Police personnel dedicated to this mission.

The State Police is unique as the only law enforcement agency in New York State with the ability to deploy large numbers of professionally trained police officers anywhere in the State on short notice in response to an emergency or natural disaster. The State Police is also available for large-scale deployments to meet an immediate need for law enforcement services in any community. This was clearly demonstrated over 23 days this past summer during the Clinton

Correctional escape in Dannemora where we deployed as many as 532 Troopers and 200 Investigators from around the State to assist with that investigation. At its peak, State Police directed 1560 personnel from sixteen (16) agencies in the escape investigation. In addition, we continue our partnerships with the Office of Emergency Management and Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services with a focus on disaster preparedness and response readiness.

Our first and foremost priority continues to be the safety of the public and our Troopers who protect them. Toward that goal, we will continue to provide our Troopers with the necessary equipment and other resources to insure safety as they perform their duties. The Governor recognizes this need after observing the level of sophistication and tactics employed at criminal events in the United States and abroad and has committed to new funding for additional patrol rifles, rifle resistant body armor plates and ballistic helmets for State Police patrols statewide.

Illegal drug use and its impact continues to dominate headlines in our country. Heroin availability and abuse continues. State Police will continue to aggressively work in partnership with local police agencies to investigate drug-related crimes and to arrest offenders. Our Troopers, as first responders, continue to patrol with Naloxone, the opioid reversal drug which we have administered 132 times in medical emergencies involving overdoses. 114 of those administered Naloxone survived as a result of our efforts.

The use of social media to foster the relationship between the agency and the citizens we serve has been successful in improving cooperation with law enforcement efforts in the communities we serve. By posting safety-related and crime alert information on Twitter and Facebook, the State Police has generated enhanced investigative capabilities that have led to successful case resolutions and shared important public safety information.

This year we will be the first full year for the Sexual Assault Victims Unit that arose from passage of the "Enough is Enough" legislation and the Governor's commitment to combatting sexual assault on college and university campuses. Fifteen (15) State Police personnel will work statewide to ensure uniformity in the handling of campus sexual assault investigations, provide investigative assistance and training to campus or local police investigating these cases, and to educate individuals and campus communities regarding victim's rights and available resources.

Agency staffing remains an area of constant executive-level discussion within the State Police. We continue to request and conduct Academy classes so that adequate staffing levels are maintained to perform our core mission priorities without sacrificing the response time or the safety of our Troopers. We will continue to look for additional efficiencies through our partnerships with other law enforcement agencies throughout the State and through consolidation of State government services where practical and possible.

As you are aware, 85% of the appropriations made for State Police operations are in support of personnel service obligations, of which approximately 93% supports the salaries and overtime expenses of sworn members. The vast majority of the non-personal service appropriations are best characterized as non-discretionary expenditures. Expenditures for vehicles, equipment, facilities and communications are all essential to providing the tools necessary for the men and women of the State Police to fulfill their law enforcement missions.

New Yorkers have come to expect public service from a stable, well-deployed and adequately-resourced State Police. I am proud to say that New Yorkers can be confident their expectations are being met. It is the integrity, knowledge, dedication and quality of our men and women that distinguishes the New York State Police. I am honored and privileged to be a part of such a professional police agency and its great traditions.

I thank you for your support of the State Police and for this opportunity today to address you.