



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Removing Politics From the Role of the State Police Superintendent, Mandating Accountability and Independence

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REMOVING POLITICS FROM THE ROLE OF STATE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT, MANDATING ACCOUNTABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

(Albany, NY) To crack down on the dangerous misuse of the State Police force, State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) and Assembly Member Hakeem Jeffries (D-Brooklyn) unveiled sweeping reforms (S.7104/A.TBD) to the process by which the Superintendent of the State Police is nominated, confirmed, and carries out the responsibilities of the office. The legislation will require greater accountability, independence, and transparency in the operation of the State Police.

Recent scandals have exposed how political influence resulted in the unfortunate and dangerous abuse of the State Police force. Such meddling between politics and policing, undermines public confidence and disturbs the ability of the State Police to carry out its duties as the state's preeminent law enforcement unit. These reforms will mandate the highest standard of accountability by the person serving as Superintendent, and ensure the integrity of the agency and its officers is not compromised by political interference. The plan:

- Limits the Superintendent to a single ten-year term, following the model of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to prevent a Superintendent from answering solely to a Governor and instead allowed to focus on the responsibilities of the Office to the public.
- Mandates a full record annually of all intra- and inter-governmental activities between the State Police and any governmental entity **to ensure the agency has not acted in response**

to or for the sake of political motives, including information detailing any special requests from the Executive and the Legislature for services of the State Police beyond traditional services provided by the State Police. The report requires certification and anything proven false subjects the Superintendent and/or Administrator of the State Police Executive Service Unit to sanctions and/or penalties.

- Requires, for the first time ever the Superintendent to appear before biennial public hearings on the personnel and administrative needs and plans of the State Police, as well as annual State Budget hearings.
- Provides for the removal of a Superintendent by only the Legislature following a majority vote in both houses.

“Too often, Superintendents have confused their responsibility to the public with their desire to please a Governor,” said Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan). “Unlike an agency or authority, who follows the direction of an Executive, the State Police must maintain a level of independence from the political needs of whomever occupies the Governor’s Mansion, as well as accountability to the people of this state. The reputation of those who commit themselves to the State Police should not suffer because of poor decisions made by Superintendents.”

"Throughout the administrations of the last three governors, the State Police have been subjected to improper and coercive political influence that undermines their role as a professional law enforcement organization," said Assembly Member Hakeem Jeffries (D-Brooklyn). "This legislation will help depoliticize the state police and restore desperately needed accountability to the institution."

Senator Eric Adams (D-Brooklyn) said, “The role of the New York State Police must be free from the influence of politics. The State Police cannot ‘serve, protect and defend the people’ if the integrity of its decisions is hamstrung by political concerns. This legislation will reform the way in which the Superintendent of the State Police is nominated and revise the chain of command. It will guarantee the independence of the State Police and ensure that its focus on law enforcement and crime prevention remains undiluted by any outside pressure, interference, or manipulation.”

Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) said, “By structuring the State Police Superintendent appointment process similar to the FBI model, the focus of the State Police can remain on its core mission to serve, protect and defend. The thousands of Troopers who put their lives on the line each day deserve to hold their heads high, and this legislation will help them do so by shielding the agency from political influence.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Queens) said, “This legislation implements overdue accountability improvements, shines sunlight on the actions of the State Police, and depoliticizes an agency which for too long has been controlled by too few. Our State Police officers are some of the hardest working and most honorable people in the state, and I am pleased this legislation will protect them from future abuses.”

Senator Neil D. Breslin (D-Albany) said, “The State Police is comprised of men and women of the highest integrity who put their lives on the line for the residents of this state. Ensuring that they can perform their

duties without fear of political repercussions will enable them to maintain the quality of service they are known for. These men and women are dedicated to protecting us, now it is our turn to protect them.”

Senator Eric T. Schneiderman (D-Manhattan/Bronx) said, "Recent scandals have demonstrated the need for the State Police Superintendent to be independent from the politics of the Governor's office. With these reforms, Independence Day will come early this year for the State Police."