



New York State Police

Investigators Association

I.U.P.A.–Local 4 AFL-CIO



February 5, 2014

Good afternoon,

My name is Jeffrey Kayser and I am the President of the New York State Police Investigators Association, the union that represents over 1,100 Investigators and Senior Investigators of the New York State Police who are all assigned to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, or more commonly referred to as the BCI.

It is an honor for me to speak today on behalf of these brave men and women of the BCI, and I would like to thank you for affording me the opportunity to testify here this afternoon at these budget hearings.

The New York State Legislature has always been supportive of the New York State Police Investigators Association and the work that our hard-working members do each and every day and I would like to extend to you our thanks for your support.

I would first like to take a moment or two to explain that the job of a State Police Investigator or Senior Investigator is a very unique and challenging one and that the members of the BCI perform a broad range of duties. The BCI is the plain-clothes and undercover arm of the New York State Police and some of the assignments that we carry out are extremely dangerous, especially in the arena of undercover investigations, where anything can become a life-threatening situation in just a matter of seconds.

A significant portion of BCI Investigators and Senior Investigators are assigned to narcotics enforcement. The members assigned to the various BCI narcotics units and drug task forces deal with arresting street-level drug dealers up to long-term investigations that dismantle major drug operation trafficking networks. The BCI seizes millions of dollars of assets each year from these drug organizations that we infiltrate.

The BCI members assigned to our Community Narcotics Enforcement Teams, (CNET) are undercover on the streets of towns and cities across New York, purchasing narcotics from drug-dealers in face-to-face, hand-to-hand, on-the-street transactions. It should go without saying, but a good percentage of these drug dealers are armed.

The BCI members assigned to the Drug Enforcement Task Force work as a team with federal and local law enforcement to investigate major drug trafficking operations that sometimes take our members to foreign lands to conduct their undercover operations.

These brave men and women perform their undercover duties in extremely perilous environments and we have had our members shot and killed while operating in these undercover assignments.

There are also a significant number of Investigators and Senior Investigators who are assigned to State Police stations throughout the state, commonly referred to as station backroom units. These Investigators are tasked with all types of felony-level investigations such as grand larcenies, burglaries, sex crimes, robberies and homicides. These men and women are the ones who deal with the horrific cases of physically or sexually abused children. In addition, they handle all types of cases involving any type of death, from unattended deaths to accidental deaths to suicides and of course homicides. They deal with grand larcenies against people as well as corporate fraud, and they deal with every type of identity theft imaginable. These men and women of the BCI investigate virtually every type of crime that can be committed.

We have members assigned to our Violent Felony Warrant Units across the state that team-up with federal and local law enforcement agencies in a task-force structure to locate and apprehend the most violent predators that are out on our streets today.

We have BCI units that specialize in every form of Forensic Investigation. Their talents and investigative capabilities are simply extraordinary and their work leads to convictions in the most difficult of cases.

We have members assigned to Violent Crime Investigative Teams in every geographical Troop area of the state. These units team-up with other BCI units as well as local law enforcement to assist with the most serious investigations of violent crime, predominantly but not limited to, homicides.

Our Computer Crimes Unit (CCU) is second to none. Just one of their functions is to actively target sex offenders who target our children. Every day across every part of our state these Investigators in the CCU serve search warrants and go through darkened doors to apprehend these sexual predators.

There are numerous other BCI specialty units that all have specific areas of expertise, such as the Financial Crimes Unit who specializes in forensic accounting. There is the Electronics Unit that performs all types of electronic surveillance and the Calea Unit that specializes in wiretaps, just to name a few.

The arm of the State Police that deals with intelligence and counter-terrorism is the BCI. We have units dedicated to gathering intelligence on terrorism, border security and smuggling operations, crime analysis and gang organizations.

All of those BCI Units that I just named not only perform State Police case investigative duties, they all assist local law enforcement agencies from the smallest village to major cities across this state, with their specific technical or special

investigative needs that in some cases, these local agencies are not adequately equipped or experienced to handle.

In addition to those BCI units, there are also BCI Investigators and Senior Investigators assigned to the Protective Services Unit, who perform dignitary protection duties. I am certain that you have seen these men and women surrounding the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor and other high-profile dignitaries.

As you can see, the BCI arm of the State Police has a diverse mission and although we are not as visible as the uniform force, the missions that we fulfill are nevertheless extremely important to the safety of the citizens of the great State of New York.

We have three major budgetary concerns this year that I trust you will all understand.

Our first concern is manpower. The ranks of the BCI are down over 200 positions since just June of 2008. We are doing a great deal more in workload with considerably less manpower and this trend needs to be addressed. In 2008 our strength was 1316. Today we have only 1103 members. Let me now say that I believe our staffing levels would be even worse if not for the steadfast efforts of our State Police Superintendent, Joseph D'Amico. Superintendent D'Amico has continually endeavored to lobby for Basic School classes at the State Police Academy. Thankfully, Governor Cuomo heard Superintendent D'Amico's pleas for more manpower and he recognized the desperate need to re-institute Academy classes. There have been Academy classes in 2011, 2012 and 2013, but more needs to be done because unfortunately, these classes are not keeping up with the retirements. In order to get new Investigators placed into the BCI, there has to be an adequate staffing level of Troopers in the field in order to promote Troopers to Investigators. I hope that you recognize how important additional Academy classes are to the mission of the State Police, both for the uniform force as well as the BCI force.

Our next cause for concern is equipping the BCI with the appropriate equipment it needs in order to perform its mission safely. I can show you notes of various meetings between our union and the Division of State Police that go back to 2006, relating to the equipment needs of the BCI. Each and every year we are told by the Division Administration that there is insufficient funding in the State Police operating budget to fulfill our basic equipment needs and subsequently, our equipment needs go unaddressed. I am speaking of basic safety needs, such as EMS Trauma bags in BCI vehicles, collapsible batons for all members of the BCI and emergency lighting for BCI vehicles that will allow our BCI vehicles to be observed from 360 degrees. These are simple and basic safety needs that we have been asking for year after year and they have all gone un-addressed.

I explained earlier that the special investigative work that the BCI does every day accounts for millions of dollars in seized assets from criminals and criminal enterprises. Although the investigative work of BCI Investigators brings those monies in to the State coffers, the money simply never gets allocated back to BCI needs, such as the equipment that I just described to you. I find it perplexing that the BCI does not benefit from the fruits of their labor, that the seized assets go into the State General Fund and the BCI is left to plea year after year for basic equipment issues that would afford them a much safer work environment.

The final issue I would like to explain to you again relates directly to the safety of the Investigators and Senior Investigators of the BCI and that is the deterioration and the aging of our fleet of vehicles. State Police vehicles, both marked and unmarked, often operate in response to emergencies at high-speeds and our vehicles need to be maintained to reflect that dynamic. Our members are operating vehicles that are greater in age and with higher mileages than the State Police ever has. Many of our vehicles now have over 150,000 miles on them. I can tell you stories of rotted-out holes in floorboards, brake line failures, entire roofs being replaced and a host of other issues mostly related to rot and corrosion attributed to the age of the vehicles. I think the issue speaks for itself.

In closing I would like to add that I believe Governor Cuomo made a good choice when he selected Joseph D'Amico to become the Superintendent of the State Police. I have been a member of the New York State Police for over 27 years and I have worked under numerous Superintendents. In addition, I have been a union representative in both the Troopers PBA and the Investigators Association, dating back to the days of the Pataki administration, and in that time and in my capacity as a union representative, I have dealt directly with several Superintendents and their respective administrations. I think I am certainly qualified to state that Superintendent D'Amico is doing an excellent job as the Superintendent of the New York State Police.

Superintendent D'Amico has been willing to listen to our concerns as a union and he has been quite responsive to our issues. He has both depth and vision and he demonstrates a clear understanding of the needs of the men and women who serve in the field for the State Police. Superintendent D'Amico is a strong leader and he advocates to the very best of his ability to bring the Division of State Police the resources it needs to conduct its mission for the people of the State of New York. Having said that, a continual process of State Police Academy classes is paramount to the safety of the citizens of the State of New York and I am hoping that you will all support Superintendent D'Amico in securing a steady flow of State Police Academy classes for this year and the years to come..

Additionally, I would hope that you will recognize and consider the concerns that I have shared with you here today relating to the safety of the members of the BCI, specifically in regards to their equipment needs and vehicle safety. I respectfully ask for your assistance in securing funding specifically earmarked for BCI equipment needs.

The New York State Police Investigators Association is eager to work with you on this budget as well as other issues that are important to our members. We have always enjoyed positive and cooperative relationships with you and we look forward to continuing these relationships in the future.

Thank you again for affording me the opportunity to testify here today. I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have.