



April 21, 2010

Dear Committee members,

I have been asked to share comments presented to me by members the Ohio State Troopers Association, the exclusive bargaining representative for Sergeants, Troopers, Dispatchers and Electronic Technicians employed by the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Many members are wary of the Committee's true purpose in creation. It has been no secret over the years that the Patrol, as an organization, has been the subject of much questioning by the Buckeye State Sheriff's Association (B.S.S.A.). Sheriff Departments across Ohio are woefully underfunded. It has been presented by the B.S.S.A. that many sheriff departments are underfunded and understaffed. It has brought to light in this forum that the majority of the fine money revenues generated by troopers reverts back to the Counties. Why is that money, which is derived through traffic citations, not adequately apportioned to the sheriff departments?

We troopers have been hard at work for the citizens of Ohio since our creation as an organization. We have not only enforced the traffic laws and criminal laws on state property, but we have removed enormous amounts of drugs, illegal weapons, contraband, and felons that were headed for our communities around the state. We have collectively investigated crimes against society in our own jurisdiction, and have assisted other agencies throughout the state in every kind of situation imaginable. We have been dispatched to countless bar fights, domestics, breaking and entering situations in progress, suicidal welfare checks, bank robberies, and shots fired, to back up other agencies. We have served our own warrants and assisted other agencies in serving theirs on very dangerous people. We have been involved in high speed chases, man hunts, and some of us have been in the penitentiaries, like Lucasville.

We do these things for the citizens of Ohio and our fellow law enforcement officers that we work alongside throughout the state. When we are working in furtherance of our collective mission, we are brothers and sisters working together with each other. It's not about politics. It's not about which department we work for. We are brothers and sisters in arms. When a deputy sheriff needs our help or we need theirs, we have to be able to count on each other. In most Ohio counties the sheriff's departments are small and many communities have a very small police force. When one of these deputies or officers is in need of our help, we render assistance. We do not stop and ask if it is an emergency. Would the B.S.S.A or anyone else have us not assist them, for

political reasons? The unfortunate consequence is that most of our citizens do not know the limits of our authority and arrest powers.

As to the jurisdictional issues that have been raised, let us be clear that we do not want to be state police. We do feel that the citizens of Ohio do deserve a state police force, but the financial undertaking would be enormous and traffic safety would suffer. That being said, we feel that we should not have to work within the gray areas of the law that we are often forced to do. Our mission should remain traffic safety, but for the citizens of Ohio, we should have arrest authority when witness to a crime. A comment was made in one of the committee meetings that everyone has jurisdictional issues. That is only true with respect to county or local municipalities when they leave their county or city. Our jurisdiction is the State of Ohio. We are out in the remote parts of the county, in the schools, at speech details, etc. Troopers have been in restaurants where someone is getting out of control, and have been helpless to make an arrest. We have been sitting outside of a domestic situation and watched for over forty-five minutes for someone from another agency to get there. Is this what the citizens of Ohio expect? Is this what they deserve? If it was your son, daughter, or wife that needed our help, would you want us to wait?

The question was raised in the meetings as to what gives us authority to help another department when they asked for it in a non-emergency situation. Unfortunately, the law is not written clearly. There is the question of what constitutes an emergency? We believe that anytime another police agency requests assistance, it is an emergency; otherwise, there would be no reason to call for the assistance of a different agency. If a trooper is a witness to or privy to a crime in progress, they owe the citizens a response. If the average citizen was asked what they would expect, we all know what the answer would be. We have all worked in counties where the sheriff's department sends a police officer well outside of his or her jurisdiction to handle a situation. That seems to be okay, because, well it is not a trooper. Is there any one department in the state that has all of its crimes solved, and all of the criminals incarcerated?

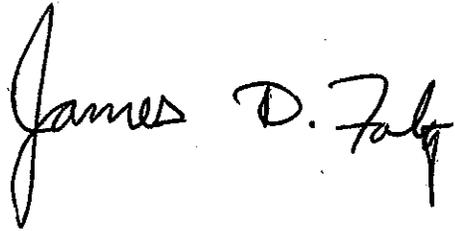
This is a 9/11 world we live in and we should all be working together, not against each other. We have worked criminal patrol interdictions in some of our cities, to the delight of the chiefs and sheriffs. It brings resources that are not always available. That pesky question of jurisdiction is at issue however. The interdictions are good for everyone involved and most importantly the people we all serve. Should jurisdiction hamper these operations in what has become a drug prone and violent society? When a 911 dispatch call comes into a post about a domestic situation, or a home invasion, and no deputy is available, what should we do? Should we not act and possibly let someone die? Common sense surely dictates that action be taken to prevent injury or death.

In closing we would ask this. Let us forget about the state police issue and give troopers the jurisdiction to act when witnessing a crime, assisting a citizen, or another police officer. The world we live in is becoming more violent and we must all work together to protect the citizens we serve and each other. As we all feel the economic impact of this recession, budgets will be cut which will mean cuts to sheriff's

departments and police agencies. It only makes sense to let us assist everyone to the benefit of the citizens of the State of Ohio. We do not want to usurp sheriff and local law enforcement's authority. We just want to be able to do our jobs effectively and to the benefit of the citizens of Ohio. This is not for our own benefit, as we will not get anything in return; we will continue to do our job to the best of our ability. We will however get the satisfaction of knowing that our citizens are better off due to our contribution and ability to act.

This committee has discussed the different roles, duties and responsibilities of Highway Patrol Troopers; but in reality, troopers, police officers and deputies are all law enforcement officers. We're all open to the same risks, whether it is responding to events, such as riots or making routine traffic stops, the dangers are real and can sometimes claim an officers life.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James D. Foltz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" and a distinct "F" at the end.

Trooper James D. Foltz