

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE



**Testimony Before the Ohio State Highway Patrol Mission Review Task Force
Presented by R. Steven Bailey, Chief of Police, Miami Township Police Department
President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
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Good morning. I am Steven Bailey, Chief of Police, Miami Township Police Department and the President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. Thank you for allowing me a few minutes this morning to present some thoughts about the Ohio State Highway Patrol. I am speaking today on behalf of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. We are an organization committed to the improvement of professional policing everywhere. We have over 900 members and represent nearly every Police Chief in the State of Ohio. The OACP was founded in 1928, five years before the Ohio State Highway patrol.

My remarks today will be focused on three points. Those are relationships, resources and authority.

We have been pleased to have had an active representative on this Task Force in the person of John Peach, Public Safety Director and Chief of Police of Kent State University Police Department. John has ably represented us here and regularly updated me on the proceedings of the Task Force. In support of his work on the Task Force, we conducted a survey of our membership several weeks ago to gauge the relationships that exist between our member agencies and the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Rather than relying on anecdotal remarks, we acted as professionals and sought the factual evidence. We have shared the results of that survey with the Task Force. We were pleased with the level of response and the frankness of the responders. Overall, the survey found that our Chiefs and their many separate agencies enjoy a very good relationship with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. It is a relationship built on trust and reputation. The trust comes in knowing that if we ask the Patrol to help, they will do so willingly and with excellence of execution. The relationship is also built on reputation. As I mentioned a few lines ago, the OACP has been in existence since before the Patrol. Because of that, we have had the opportunity to watch the Patrol grow from its very beginning and continuing through its present form. Throughout the 77 year history of the Patrol, local law enforcement has admired them for their commitment to training, commitment to discipline, and commitment to professionalism. These traits have built for them a reputation that is unmatched in our state by any other law enforcement agency. That reputation has served them well and we trust it will continue into the future. We appreciate having a solid professional relationship with the Patrol, and look forward to its continuance.

My second point is on the matter of resources. I need spend little time telling any of you about the problems with finding the resources to conduct professional law enforcement in the current economy. The budgetary challenges of the State of Ohio are well known. The painful cuts in staffing and services by our Sheriffs' Offices have been described in many local news outlets. And the same difficult reductions have been

made in many local police departments as well. Few agencies at any level have escaped the funding reductions that are also been experienced by other non public safety agencies. I think, however, that few people know how long the Ohio State Highway Patrol has been dealing with this issue. Reading through the many reports and testimony already presented to this Task Force that have described the several force reductions that have already taken place in the patrol would be an eye opener to nearly anyone. Couple those facts with the testimony of Captain Teaforde while he was the Acting Superintendent concerning new responsibilities and increasing demands for services, I wonder how long anyone can expect the Patrol to continue to meet their mission in its current state. The Ohio State Highway Patrol is the only state-wide law enforcement agency in Ohio. It is the sole performer of many of the tasks it executes every day. While this Task Force considers the current and future Mission of the Patrol, it should seriously consider who will perform any of these tasks if they are no longer performed by the Patrol. What local agency has the resources, skills and experience to carry out tasks like school bus inspections, license examinations, and others? Which local agencies will take on the responsibility for presenting the technical training now provided by the Patrol to any law enforcement agent in the state? The Patrol must be provided a reliable source of funding to allow it to have the resources necessary to carry out those tasks that the State Legislature, the Governor's Office and others have assigned to them over the years. Even the most fuel efficient vehicle must have a supply of fuel to operate. A professional law enforcement agency like the Patrol is no different. It cannot perform well without adequate resources. While the Governor and the Legislature develop the biennial budget, they must prioritize funding to those governmental functions that serve the critical needs of the citizenry. Certainly public safety and law enforcement are among those critical needs.

Finally, there is the matter of authority for the Patrol. The Ohio Revised Code now spells out the authority granted to the Patrol to accomplish its routine duties. It also spells out when and how the patrol can assist local government in the execution of law enforcement responsibilities. The Patrol has never shirked from those requests. But, the patrol has been severely limited by the language of the Code. Too many conditional phrases make it difficult if not at times impossible to render assistance to local law enforcement for routine tasks. The law needs to be changed to remove these obstacles and to allow the State Patrol to lend all the assistance that it can, when it is requested. We do not advocate creating a State Police Force. We do advocate allowing the trained professionals with whom we have a solid working relationship, to be permitted to assist us to the full limit of their ability. The legislature has not placed such restraints on Sheriff's deputies who aid local law enforcement, or vice versa. We ask that our partners in the Patrol be granted the same authority.

In conclusion, the OACP thanks the Legislature for including us in this process and the Task Force for allowing us time here today. We look forward to a continuing professional relationship with the Patrol. We urge the designation of a continuing source of funding for the patrol. And, we urge the Legislature to modify the current Code to allow the Patrol the authority to assist us as needed.

Thank You.