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Remarks by NY State Troopers PBA President Thomas H. Mungeer on January 29, 2019 regarding the 2019-2020 Executive Budget

Members of the Legislature, thank you for allowing me to present important information on behalf of all New York State Troopers as well as the citizens of this state. My name is Thomas Mungeer, and I am honored to represent 7,000 active and retired uniformed State Troopers in my position as President of the New York State Troopers PBA, the labor union representing those dedicated public servants. This is my tenth year addressing all of you, and this is the tenth year the PBA has taken a strong stance in advocating for the safety of our members.

Manpower - sworn members, the men and women who wear the gray uniform, patrol our highways, and respond to emergencies - is once again our top priority. We are thankful that Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature have been responsive to our requests in the past but we must reaffirm our commitment to replenish our dwindling manpower levels. Fewer Troopers on the road will endanger not only the public, but also the brave and dedicated Troopers who put their lives on the line each and every day. Being a New York State Trooper is a difficult and dangerous job, as evidenced by the 29 line-of-duty deaths since 2006.

The PBA is also once again advocating for the reinstatement of the School Resource Officer (SRO) program statewide and the addition of Troopers assigned to construction zones on state highways. Reinstating the SRO program statewide will help Troopers make more community contacts as well as safeguard against threats targeting schools. The presence of Troopers in construction zones on state highways will act as not only a deterrent for reckless driving, but will also provide for a fast response time in case of an accident.

With that in mind, we are requesting funding for 500 additional Troopers in the form of two Academy classes of 250 recruits. While the Governor's budget proposal called for an increase in hiring, the positions mentioned barely covered the annual attrition level.

Our other top priority this year is focused on the replacement of high-mileage patrol vehicles. Money authorized by the Legislature for vehicles in the past has helped ease the situation. However, replacing high-mileage patrol vehicles is a constant process. The Division of State Police attempts to replace patrol vehicles once they have been driven 125,000 miles. Recent figures show that 26% of our fleet exceeds the 125,000-mile threshold, including 17 cars that have more than 200,000 miles on their odometers.

The reason we became New York State Troopers in the first place was because we care about the safety of you, your friends and family, and the communities across the state. That's why I must speak out about the consequences of not having adequate manpower and proper equipment for sworn members of the New York State Police to properly do their jobs, especially in this era of the ever-present threat of domestic terrorism.