



February 13, 2025

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Krueger, Chairman Pretlow and the Senators and Assemblymembers of the committee. My name is Tim Dymond, and I am a retired Senior Investigator with the New York State Police and the current Executive Director of the New York State Police Investigators Association (NYSPIA). Our union represents approximately 1,200 active State Police Senior Investigators and Investigators, located strategically throughout New York State. Our members are assigned to the Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) and handle the most serious cases in every county across the state. These cases include, but are not limited to; murders, rape, robberies, child abuse, kidnappings and human trafficking. Most recently, our members work helped crack the Gilgo Beach Serial killer case. We also deal with the most highly specialized and dynamic assignments including counterterrorism, gang and undercover narcotics investigations, forensic investigations and dignitary protection.

Each one of our members began their career as a New York State Police uniform Trooper. The hiring process to become a NY State Trooper is grueling and competitive, which is one of the reasons the New York State Police are one of the premier Law Enforcement agencies in this great country. The NYSPIA membership is comprised of hand selected, experienced Troopers that represent the very best of our agency. Their performance must stand out among their peers and they must demonstrate the intelligence, maturity and integrity to investigate the complex crimes mentioned above.

The New York State Police, as an agency, have proven to be highly adaptable and continue to take a leadership role in the law enforcement community, while providing the highest quality law enforcement services to the citizens of New York State. To maintain this level of service, I have detailed below a few items that deserve consideration in the pending budget.

To echo what Superintendent James stated earlier today, our highest priority continues to be the recruitment of new Troopers and the replacement of retiring members within our ranks. Like many Law Enforcement agencies across the country, we are struggling with recruitment and retention. We continue to lose our most experienced members to retirement at an alarming rate. The BCI membership currently sits just above 1,200 members and ideally should be at 1,300. However, a Trooper must have at least 4 years of experience before he or she can apply to become an investigator, and with the reduced number of uniform Troopers, it is exacerbating an already difficult situation. We're losing Investigators and Senior Investigators to retirement, but there aren't enough uniform Troopers to draw from and then there aren't enough recruits coming in to maintain the ranks of uniform Troopers.



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In the past, the NYS Trooper exam would be given every 4 or 5 years. The test would routinely get 25,000 or more applicants, and admission to the NYS Police was extremely competitive. More recently the exam is almost always offered on a rolling basis and it is no secret that we are having a hard time finding recruits who meet our rigorous standard. New Troopers are being hired within six months of taking their entrance exam. Previously, it would take five years or more to get hired.

The Executive Budget's proposal to allow the hiring age to increase on the front end as well as increasing the mandatory retirement age to 63 will be a small but necessary adjustment. As difficult as hiring has become, we must continue to find ways to identify and get recruits so we can keep pace with the number of retirements and resignations. We hope that the Legislature will continue to support additional State Police classes moving forward.

While we strongly support additional counterterrorism Investigators at the Northern Border we cannot make these additions without additional hiring.

NYSPIA is in strong support of the Discovery changes proposed in the Governor's Budget. The cases our members work, almost always have large amounts of discovery materials. Currently, entire cases are being dismissed over minor discovery errors. Not only does this mean the bad guy goes free...but the victims of these crimes do not receive justice. It is widely known across NY, that under the current Discovery Laws, almost any case can be beat with a reasonably good defense attorney.

The current Discovery laws have created a nearly impossible task for our members and for prosecutors across NY. The new changes would allow prosecutors to certify once they have disclosed all "relevant materials" in their actual possession. The new changes allow for automatic redaction of witnesses' personal addresses and data unrelated to the case. This eliminates the need to engage in lengthy litigation to redact such material. Most importantly minor errors in discovery reform won't cause entire cases to get thrown out.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to bring these issues to your attention on behalf of my membership. Your assistance with the budget concerns mentioned today will help us maintain the highest level of professionalism that the citizens of this great state have come to expect from the New York State Police. I am confident that you will share the same concerns that we hold today while making decisions related to the NYS Budget.