

2026-2027 BUDGET REQUEST  
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

STATEMENT TO HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2026



Good afternoon, Chairmen Harris and Struzzi and members of the House Appropriations Committee. I am Lieutenant Colonel George Bivens, Acting Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

With me today are the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Major Matthew Nickey; the Deputy Commissioner of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Joanne Reed; the Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Professional Responsibility, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher King; and the Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Ms. Brooke Meade.

We are appreciative of Governor Shapiro, his staff, and members of the General Assembly for their unwavering commitment to public safety and PSP operations. Furthermore, we would like to thank the residents of Pennsylvania for their unyielding support of the PSP.

The PSP has jurisdiction in all political subdivisions within the Commonwealth and provides full-time or part-time police service to 1,728 municipalities, comprising approximately 82 percent of the Commonwealth's total land area, and 61 percent of all highway miles. In 2025, our Troopers investigated 76,764 crashes and made 15,294 arrests for DUI. Additionally, our commitment to highway safety was demonstrated by the 67,913 commercial motor vehicle inspections conducted statewide and the issuance of 513,968 traffic citations for violations such as those related to distracted driving and speeding.

The daily activities required to ensure the safety of those residing in and traveling through the Commonwealth depend on reliable patrol vehicles. Outfitted with the mobile data terminal and P25 radio, the patrol vehicle is a Trooper's office, transportation, and communication lifeline.

More recently, the PSP has unveiled a series of patrol vehicle enhancements that significantly improve visibility during traffic stops and emergency responses, increasing safety for both troopers and the public. The Governor's budget proposal continues to invest in a regular replacement cycle of the aging vehicle fleet to ensure reliable responses to emergency calls for service.

The PSP continues to deliver specialized services to all municipal police agencies at no cost to the municipalities. Our Computer Crime Unit is dedicated to the investigation of crimes such as child exploitation and identity theft. The Computer Crime Unit conducts the forensic analysis of digital evidence submitted by many federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Our Bureau of Forensic Services provides drug identification, DNA analysis, latent

fingerprint examination, and other laboratory services to the same entities at our seven regional crime laboratories.

In 2025, the PSP further strengthened its forensic capabilities by launching a Rapid DNA program and deploying 15 fully automated genetic analyzers to troops across the Commonwealth. This significant advancement enables investigators to generate investigative leads more quickly, identify suspects, and exclude individuals with greater efficiency. By dramatically reducing turnaround times for DNA results, Rapid DNA provides timely, actionable information that helps bring justice to victims and hold offenders accountable.

For over a decade, the PSP has been a leader within the law enforcement community in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting instances of human trafficking. In 2025, members of our Organized Crime Task Force continued to

participate in joint investigations with our local and federal law enforcement partners to combat these crimes. Additionally, the PSP has provided human trafficking detection training to hundreds of law enforcement professionals to assist them with these types of investigations.

The PSP continues to experience increased demands for our specialized services. In 2025, the Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) responded to 575 activations, underscoring the team's critical role in addressing high-risk incidents across the Commonwealth. Aviation assets continue to provide invaluable assistance in criminal investigations, search and rescue, and recovery efforts. The 18 full-time Troopers assigned to the Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) conducted 376 assessments in 2025 to help make our schools and places

of worship safer. In our effort to address gun violence, the PSP has partnered with local officials to focus on removing illegally possessed firearms from our communities. The Office of Community Engagement continues to address barriers, ease tensions, contribute to community events, and complement our recruitment efforts.

Over the past year, the PSP has moved forward with new initiatives and enhanced existing programs designed to provide the residents of this great Commonwealth with the police services they deserve. For example, the PSP refreshed the mobile video recorders in our vehicles and outfitted all 16 Troops with body cameras as of April 3, 2025. Thanks to the support of the Shapiro Administration and this General Assembly, construction of the new training academy is underway. The Marquee Building is expected to be completed in October of 2026

with the entire project projected to be finished in 2028. The proposed design will enhance scenario-based training and better equip our Troopers to effectively employ de-escalation techniques and less lethal force options, while providing more comprehensive training to interact with those in mental or emotional crisis.

Investing in training is a proven risk-management strategy that protects lives, strengthens professionalism, and reinforces confidence in law enforcement institutions.

Because personnel are essential to delivering superior police service to the public, the PSP has explored innovative ways to address decreased interest in the law enforcement profession. We have dedicated full-time recruiters who work to limit barriers associated with the hiring and retention of a diverse workforce. Programs such as the Cadet Life Tour, Hill Impact Program, and Law and

Leadership Academy offer motivated students and adults opportunities to engage in experiences that may enhance their success in obtaining a career in law enforcement.

To further evaluate the personnel needs of the PSP, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee published *A Study of the Statutory Cap on the Pennsylvania State Police Complement* in March of 2020, pursuant to Senate Resolution 105 of 2019. The study found that between 2001 and 2019, the PSP's operational demands expanded significantly. During this period, the PSP assumed responsibility for policing an additional 65 municipalities, experienced a 38 percent increase in total incidents, and absorbed 55 additional mandated responsibilities requiring additional personnel resources. These mandates imposed essential operational duties aligned with the PSP's mission but were frequently implemented without corresponding

increases in staffing. As a result, personnel were diverted from patrol operations, investigative functions, and proactive enforcement efforts to meet mandated obligations.

The PSP's complement was statutorily capped at 4,310 enlisted members by Act 100 of 2001. Act 34 of 2023, signed by Governor Shapiro on December 13, 2023, increased the complement cap by 100 Troopers. This was the first complement cap increase in over two decades. However, as the PSP's responsibilities and service demands continue to expand in scope and complexity, static staffing limitations no longer reflect operational realities. Maintaining a fixed statutory cap constrains our ability to respond effectively to evolving public safety needs.

The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee further observed that prior adjustments to the cap were largely

“best guess” estimates based on conditions at the time, rather than structured workforce planning models used presently. The study noted that most state police agencies do not operate under statutory staffing caps, instead relying on the annual General Assembly appropriations process to determine staffing levels. This approach provides greater fiscal oversight, operational flexibility, and responsiveness to changing public safety demands, including the need to partner with major police departments across the Commonwealth.

Accordingly, eliminating the statutory complement cap would align the PSP with national best practices, provide necessary staffing flexibility, and ensure the Commonwealth’s public safety infrastructure remains adaptive, accountable, and capable of meeting current and future service demands.

Governor Shapiro has consistently demonstrated his commitment to public safety by prioritizing funding for the PSP. His budget proposes \$16.2 million to hire and train 380 new Troopers, which reflects a clear understanding that maintaining a strong, well-trained PSP workforce is essential to community safety across the Commonwealth.

In 2023, the college credit requirement for PSP Trooper applicants was removed. In December 2025, the PSP announced a new agreement that allows students in their senior year at participating colleges and universities to earn their remaining credits toward an associate or bachelor's degree by successfully completing cadet basic training at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy.

The new program awards academic credits much like a traditional internship completed during a student's final semester. Instead of classroom time to earn their remaining

credits, students will finish their training at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy and earn the remaining credits needed to graduate, allowing them to receive their degree and become a trooper at the same time.

Although a degree is no longer required to become a trooper, this partnership ensures that higher education remains attainable for those who seek it, supports diverse academic pathways, and produces well-prepared, credentialed professionals. Ultimately, it aligns education with public service, strengthens recruitment and retention, and maximizes the Commonwealth's investment in both workforce development and public safety.

The PSP and the Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security (OHS) have been planning and coordinating to prepare for the monumental events that the Commonwealth will host in 2026, including but not limited to America 250,

the FIFA World Cup, the NFL Draft, the America250PA concert series and the Major League Baseball All-Star Game.

These events represent an unprecedented convergence of high-profile, high-attendance gatherings within a short timeframe and across multiple locations in Pennsylvania. They present a tremendous opportunity to showcase our communities, culture, and capabilities to visitors from across the country and around the world. At the same time, they require thoughtful preparation to address the unique logistical and safety considerations that accompany large-scale public events. As such, our approach is designed to be thorough, coordinated, and forward-thinking.

While there is no single solution to securing large-scale events, our strategy is built on trusted partnerships,

continuous evaluation, and the steady work of preparation. We are proud to be part of the Commonwealth's whole-of-government effort to ensure Pennsylvania not only hosts successful events in 2026, but does so safely, responsibly, and with resilience.

The PSP remains firmly committed to continuous training, professional development, transparent practices, and dedicated service at all levels of the organization, recognizing these commitments as essential to strengthening public trust and accountability.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the members of this Committee and the General Assembly for their diligent work in recognizing and supporting our fiscal needs. Because our budget is primarily driven by personnel costs, funding the PSP is inexorably linked to our ability to provide the residents of this great Commonwealth with the quality

service they deserve and have come to expect. Governor Shapiro has proposed a budget that will ensure the PSP is well-staffed, well-funded, well-trained, and well-equipped.

In conclusion, I am proud of the men and women of the Pennsylvania State Police who continue to serve Pennsylvanians and visitors of this Commonwealth with dedication and honor. I pledge to be a good steward of the investment in the professionalism, training, and integrity inherent in the PSP.

Thank you for allowing me to address your committee. My team and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.