

Ohio State Highway Patrol Mission Review Task Force

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Minority Report and Comments  
Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association  
County Commissioners' Association of Ohio



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association and the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio have appreciated the opportunity to participate as members of the Ohio State Highway Patrol Mission Review Task Force. The testimony provided to the Task Force has been thoughtful and informative. It has also shown that the Ohio State Highway Patrol is an organization that serves Ohioans well. The testimony also shows that State Patrol Troopers and Management are professional, well trained and dedicated to meeting the mission of the Patrol as set forth in the Ohio Revised Code. We also wish to express our appreciation to the other members of the Task Force for their hard work, insightful comments and debate, and dedication to the work of the Task Force.

## **THE REPORT**

The final report of The Task Force provides some meaningful recommendations for consideration of the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Superintendent of the State Patrol. Yet, in our view, the final report of the Task Force fails to go far enough to meet the charge the General Assembly gave to the Task Force which was "to explore opportunities to improve operational efficiency, identify overlapping services, and consolidate current operations."

We were generally surprised by the reaction of the Highway Patrol to reject outright some of the potential recommendations that we felt were appropriate for additional review and analysis, especially as it relates to functions and programs that appeared to duplicate or overlap with services provided elsewhere in the law enforcement structure of this state. Our desire was to encourage more review, analysis, and research on how there could be more collaboration and coordination, if not consolidation, of certain functions and programs in an effort to contain or cut costs at a time of dwindling resources for both the state and local governments. Too often, we believe, the Patrol did not want to "explore opportunities" as the Task Force was charged by the General Assembly. Too often, we perceive the State Patrol felt it was under attack and too often the reaction of the Patrol seemed to be that of "protecting their turf." Our questioning during testimony and Task Force debate on recommendations was never meant as an attack on this fine organization, it was meant as a challenge and to see if there are ways to do things better, more efficiently, and in a more cooperative and collaborative manner with resulting cost savings to Ohio taxpayers.

Let us give you an example of one of the recommendations of the Task Force which we feel is representative of the "protectionist" attitude that seemed to pervade much of the discussion and debate on the recommendations. Recommendation Number 2 under Operational Efficiency asks the Superintendent of the Ohio State Highway Patrol to commission a review of positions in the Patrol to help determine if particular roles can best be filled by sworn or civilian personnel and the appropriate rank for sworn officers. Such a study makes sense and, in our view, should be done periodically in all organizations.

Yet, the final sentence of this recommendation states that: "This review is not intended to reduce the total number of sworn OSP personnel." One might question, if the review by the Superintendent concludes that a job currently performed by a sworn officer could be as effectively performed by a civilian employee, then why should the sworn officer's position not be abolished?

## **POSSIBLE ISSUES NOT INCLUDED IN THE FINAL REPORT THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED**

A number of issues raised by the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association were not included in the report that are worthy of additional review. In all cases, we believe these are issues that are directly within the charge by the Task Force. These issues potentially address increased operational efficiency; may involve overlapping functions; and, may provide opportunities for greater coordination and collaboration with other state entities and local law enforcement agencies. Following is a list of these issues which were rejected by a majority of the Task Force, with opposition from the Ohio State Highway Patrol:

- A recommendation to review of the possibility of the consolidation or greater collaboration between the OSP Academy with Ohio Peace Officers Training Commission (OPOTC).
- A recommendation to investigate opportunities to merge LEADS and OHLEG and other state data repositories using the SEARCH report generated several months ago.
- A recommendation to review opportunities to consolidate dispatching services with local agencies that have this service available in each county.
- A recommendation that the OSHP Computer Crimes Unit should be reviewed to allow for enhanced collaboration and/or consolidation with BCI&I.
- A recommendation to better coordinate the use of the OSHP Caravan aircraft, with its surveillance ability, with Ohio Homeland Security for real time information in the event of a man made or natural disaster.
- A recommendation to review opportunities to better collaborate or consolidate the OSHP Investigative Operations with BCI&I.
- A recommendation to investigate opportunities to merge the OSHP Crime Lab with BCI&I lab services or to enhance collaboration and cooperation.
- A recommendation for the Colonel of the Ohio State Highway Patrol to review the Polygraph services of OSHP and BCI&I.
- A recommendation for the Ohio General Assembly to review the OSHP Criminal Intelligence Unit and look toward the consolidation of all criminal Intelligence Units within state government.

We continue to believe these are areas where there may be opportunities for great efficiency, greater collaboration and a possible consolidation of functions that have the potential to save taxpayer dollars.

## **CONCLUSION**

Today's fiscal realities at the state and local level demand that government, at all levels and for all services, assure the public that they are performing needed services in the most efficient and effective manner possible. It is essential that state and local governments assure the taxpaying public that they are attempting to reduce costs and contain the rate of growth in spending. Only then can we ask for more money from taxpayers. While public safety and law enforcement is one of the basic services taxpayers expect from its government, it too must look at how it can improve and do better for the citizens. Unfortunately, this Task Force report did not look for such opportunities to the degree and level we would have hoped.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this Minority Report and Comments. We again wish to thank all of those who provided testimony, other members of the Task Force and the Staff of the Ohio Department of Public Safety for their work, with a special note of thanks to Maria Clark.

Respectfully submitted,

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