

**Testimony provided by:**

**National Fraternal Order of Police President Chuck Canterbury**

**Respectfully submitted to:**

**Pennsylvania State Senate  
Law and Justice Committee  
Hon. John C. Rafferty, Jr., Chairman  
Hon. Sean F. Logan, Democratic Chairman**

**October 17, 2005**

Good morning. My name is Chuck Canterbury, and I am the national president of the Fraternal Order of Police. First, let me thank every member of this committee for taking the time to learn more about an issue that threatens the quality of law enforcement in local, state and the federal departments.

If I could leave you with one thing it is this: Sworn officers are best suited to handle police work. It seems like such a statement should be common sense, but unfortunately it isn't. Many times, municipalities decide to civilianize positions to save costs only to discover later that candidates are difficult to find, and even those they find often leave for higher paying jobs in the private sector.

I would like to provide a few examples of how civilianization has failed.

In the late 1990's, as part of a civilianization movement, experienced sworn members' positions in the New Jersey Crime Laboratory System Documents Section were left unfilled as the last Troopers retired. The laboratory system was unable to find individuals willing to train replacement examiners and could not afford hiring experienced private examiners to fill the vacancies. The laboratory system allowed this service to lapse and placed the responsibility of finding experts for the numerous Questioned Documents cases on the separate district attorney's offices around the state at great expense to these offices. In 2001, the Pennsylvania State Police Crime Laboratory was actually contacted with regard to examining cases for the Mercer County New Jersey District Attorney's office. This request was rejected at the time due to the precedence of Pennsylvania cases and the jurisdictional issues involved. To this day, the New Jersey Laboratory system has been unable to provide this service.

Local crime laboratories that sought civilianization of sworn positions have also met with lackluster results. The Nassau County, NY Police Department moved to civilianize positions within their laboratory in 2001. The police union and local government came to an agreement that the officers' positions in ballistics, firearms and latent fingerprints would be civilianized through hiring inexperienced individuals to train under the officers within the laboratory and succeed them at the completion of their training.

The cost associated with the new hires was greater than anticipated; however, and money for hiring these civilians never materialized.

It's also important to note that having these positions filled by sworn officers gives departments the ability to use them in the event of a natural disaster or emergency. Civilians can't respond outside of their job, while a sworn officer can always be pulled out for emergencies.

It just doesn't make any sense to me why you would replace someone with 15 years or more of experience. We can't throw that away and expect our departments to provide the same level of expertise and results.

Finally I would like to make a brief comment on the announced transfer of highway patrol responsibilities in Philadelphia. Obviously from my national perspective I do not know the details of the proposal but on its surface I struggle to understand several key points;

- how do you take a city that has 6800 police officers and relieve them of patrol duties they are currently providing
- then place those patrol responsibilities on a state-wide police force of under 4000 troopers, which will likely result in transferring troopers from other parts of the state, disrupting their families, their lives, and leaving other parts of the state with less police coverage
- further, it is my understanding that Philadelphia police officers earn less than similarly tenured troopers and that it is less costly to train a city police officer, so in essence you are replacing less expensive patrols with more costly service, but will it be any better, what did you gain?
- Intuitively, this just doesn't make sense to me.

Thank you. I will be happy to take your questions.

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