

**Testimony provided by:**

**Trooper Leon Krebs (retired)**

**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 Leon Krebs, and I retired from the state police in 1993 after 31 years of service. Today, I am a Montgomery County detective where I have put my state police training to work as a ballistics and latent print examiner. And I am here today with the endorsement of Montgomery County District Attorney Bruce Castor, who supports the use of sworn members in crime labs.

If the state moves forward with its civilianization plan, it's important we put this into its proper perspective. There are currently only 650 people in the world who are considered firearms experts. The Pennsylvania State Police has 12 of them, and if these positions are civilianized, the state will be hard-pressed to find people to replace them unless they greatly increase salary and benefits to make them more competitive with the private sector – at considerable cost to taxpayers.

Training new candidates would prove to be a difficult transition for our department. If the state police is going to train the 12 civilian examiners that would replace the current staff, keep in mind that one trainer can handle three trainees at best. That would require four of the present examiners to devote all of their time to training for a two-year period. That is a 25 percent reduction in the current staff. That would have a profound negative impact on the backlog of cases.

Not only does it take two years to train, but it is my experience that an examiner isn't fully comfortable on the job until they have served and trained for five years. Having more experienced ballistics examiners also benefit prosecutors. Defense attorneys typically challenge the credibility of an examiner until they've reached the five-year mark in experience. If the state police move to civilianize these positions, it could have a direct effect on criminal cases across the state where prosecutors rely on the expertise of seasoned examiners.

Also, I think it's important to note that in May 1999 I worked with the Washington D.C. police department as a contractor training civilians in the forensics field. Of the three I spent more than a year training, two immediately departed for higher paying jobs in the private sector. Needless to say, it was a waste of time and training.

It seems to me that if you want to put more Troopers out on patrol – it would be much easier to hire new ones through the academy. It only takes nine months to train a new trooper for patrol duty. That would allow the state police to keep its highly-trained and well-experienced forensics examiners in the lab where they can do the greatest good for the state.

Thank you.

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