

Testimony provided by:

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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 Dennis Loose, and I'm here today to share my thoughts with you on the administration's plan to civilianize positions within our department. As someone who spent 25 years with the state police, including the last two decades in forensics as a latent print examiner, I can tell you without hesitation that any plans to civilianize positions such as latent print isn't as simple as it sounds.

If I could leave you with two things it's this – troopers do their jobs because it's a calling. We believe in what we do. Civilians don't have that same level of commitment, and in my experience, they typically sell their services to the highest bidder. Experts in ballistics and document examination are in demand all over the country and world. When I was with the state police, I would attend professional conferences and encounter examiners I knew who were civilians. One time they were working with Indiana and the next time with Michigan. They simply went where they could get the best offers.

Second, much has been said about the FBI civilianizing similar positions. But that didn't exactly prove successful. In one case, the FBI took one the world's foremost forensic footwear experts and redeployed him to the field. I ask you, what is the value in doing something like that? Eventually, the FBI ended up bringing many of those agents back into the lab because it didn't work.

The same will happen if the administration has its way. You can take a trooper with decades of experience in forensics out of the lab and put a radar gun in their hand – but again, what is the value in doing such a thing? That trooper has dedicated his or her career to forensic investigation, helping to solve hundreds of cases.

The administration's plan will hurt our state's efforts to fight crime and put criminals behind bars. That's a mistake we can't afford to make.

Thank you.