

Ohio Department of Public Safety
Testimony of Director John Born, Colonel Paul Pride and
Registrar Don Petit
House Finance Transportation Sub-Committee
February 8, 2017

(Director Born)

- Chairman McColley, Ranking Minority Member Reece and Members of the House Finance Transportation Sub-Committee: I am John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. It is an honor to appear before you today to testify on the budget for the Ohio Department of Public Safety.
- Last week I provided testimony on a broad range of topics that covered our Department's six divisions and other specialty areas.
- Today, I am going to have Colonel Paul Pride from the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and Registrar Don Petit from the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, provide you with more detailed information about their respective divisions.
- When they are done, we have some members of our senior staff here today who are available to answer any of your questions.
- With that said, I'd like to introduce Colonel Paul Pride.

(Colonel Pride)

- **As far back as records are available, during the past six-year period, we have achieved historically safer roads and seized more illegal drugs than at any other time in Ohio history.**
- That's the results.
- Over the past six years, Ohio roads are the safest they have ever been in our state's history.
- And over the past six years we have seized more illegal drugs than any other period in our state's history.
- This afternoon I want to tell you about how we did it and our statewide collaborative strategy.
- **Every year since 2011, Ohio troopers have made significant increases in drug interdiction.** Since 2011, Ohio troopers have interdicted more than \$268 million in drugs and contraband with a correlated increase of more than 100 percent in drug arrests over the six-year period. Just in 2016, state troopers made more than 13,000 drug arrests.
- As provided in Director Born's previous testimony, I want to reiterate the significance of three record-breaking seizures from last year.

- Among those cases, on February 16, 2016, Troopers stopped a 2013 Chevrolet Cruz for an expired registration on Interstate 70 in Preble County. Criminal indicators were observed, and a Patrol drug-sniffing canine alerted to the vehicle. A probable cause search revealed 59.5 pounds of brown powder heroin, **the largest heroin seizure in the Patrol's history.**
- **The largest methamphetamine seizure in the Patrol's history** occurred on December 2, 2016, through a traffic stop on Interstate 70, also in Preble County. A positive canine indication and probable cause search led to the discovery of 26.5 pounds of crystal methamphetamine.
- And on September 1, 2016, a Trooper stopped to assist a driver with a 2002 Chevrolet Suburban on Interstate 80 in Wood County. Criminal indicators were observed, and a consent search revealed 33,230 opiate pills, **the largest scheduled prescription pill seizure in Patrol history.**

- In total, state troopers seized 168 pounds of heroin last year.
- Every 2.2 pounds of heroin has a street value of about \$300,000, and represents 10,000 unit doses of one of the most addictive and deadly drugs in Ohio and the United States.

- So the 168 pounds of heroin we seized last year means **we prevented more than 763,000 unit doses from making it into communities in Ohio and across the country.**
- Maybe that heroin was going to a first-time user who never got addicted.
- Maybe that heroin was going to a long-term addict who sought treatment because their drug wasn't available that day.
- So once again...168 pounds of heroin – equal to more than 763,000 unit doses never made it into a community.
- That's called success.

- So, how have we made such incredible increases over the past six years in interdicting drugs like heroin?
- Fundamentally, we were able to accomplish this by elevating criminal patrol to the same mission level as highway safety, fostering broad interagency partnerships and using shared information from our partners and the public.
- While operationally successful, our methods are also a Constitutionally sound national model for a drug interdiction program.

- Last week as part of Director Born’s testimony before the full Finance Committee we provided you with the Ohio State Highway Patrol’s criminal patrol statistics which highlight the amazing success troopers have had in terms of removing dangerous, life-degrading drugs from our roadways and communities.
- But sometimes stories are more impactful than statistics.
- On November 1st of last year, the Akron Police Department and the Patrol seized 11 kilos of cocaine after attempting to make a traffic stop. The driver of the vehicle led the authorities on a two mile chase, crashed into a pole and then took off – jumping off a 30 foot overpass before he was caught. The driver faces federal drug charges. The cocaine had a street value of approximately \$1 million.
- Troopers found 10 bottles of liquid codeine, and five fraudulent prescriptions through a traffic stop on Interstate 80 in Fulton County on January 22, 2016.
- And Troopers seized 122 oxycodone and marijuana in a Hamilton County traffic stop on September 27, 2016.

- These are all examples of how we have disrupted the drug supply line to and through Ohio.
- We have also developed a collaborative approach called Prolonged Reduction of Threats by Enforcing Criminal Trends (PROTECT) Initiatives.
- In 2016, seven of these PROTECT Initiatives were conducted in counties that have seen dramatic increases in heroin/opiate overdoses and overdose deaths.
- The counties in which those initiatives were conducted included Cuyahoga, Ross, Athens, Columbiana, Hamilton (which was a Tri-State operation that included agencies from Indiana and Kentucky), Summit and Cuyahoga.
- Those seven special operations resulted in the seizure of 1,002 pounds of illegal drugs and 1,815 prescription pills.

- We also have 11 officers assigned to both federal and local drug task forces, of which four of the officers are assigned to task forces that respond to overdoses and conduct trace back investigations, in an attempt to identify the person responsible for selling to the overdose victim.
- We work directly with the Drug Enforcement Administration Cleveland Task Force. On February 9 (tomorrow) the Patrol will receive the Outstanding Opioid Investigative Effort Award from the DEA. This is a national award being presented to the Ohio State Highway Patrol – and to Ohio.
- According to the DEA, an Ohio state trooper was directly involved with taking down a major Mexican drug cartel that was importing large quantities of heroin, cocaine, marijuana and fentanyl from Juarez, Mexico to several U.S. cities, including Cleveland.

- **We're also doing more than ever in collaborating with over 40 drug task forces in the state to bring about the first-ever integrated statewide drug interdiction, disruption strategy.**
- Just last week, we had a trooper recognized as the 2016 Officer of the year by the Miami Valley Bulk Smuggling Task Force.

- The 2016 – 2018 Drug Interdiction, Disruption and Reduction Plan for the Ohio Department of Public Safety builds on the successes achieved since 2011 with the development of a new phase in coordination with the Ohio National Guard, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and in cooperation with international, national, state and local agencies and task forces.
- The Plan contains strategies that further integrate multijurisdictional drug task forces into statewide interdiction efforts and provide the framework for greater collaboration between law enforcement and treatment providers.
- Other innovative features include better statewide reporting data to the El Paso Intelligence Center, utilization of Ohio National Guard Counter-drug Analysts to assist multijurisdictional drug task forces and other law enforcement partners, and doubling the Patrol's number of drug-interdiction canines.
- Since the Governor and Mrs. Kasich's *Start Talking, 5 Minutes for Life program* began in 2013, state troopers, National Guard soldiers and local law enforcement officers have presented the program to more than 106,000 students and nearly 2,200 students have accepted a leadership responsibility by volunteering to be ambassadors of the anti-drug message within their respective schools.

- I would like to note the program's success is directly tied to the support we have received from Dr. Daniel Ross at the Ohio High School Athletic Association.
- Also, a Mansfield Post trooper took it upon himself and created a resource pamphlet that is being distributed to county law enforcement agencies. The pamphlet contains quick reference for locating treatment facilities and is also provided to people seeking assistance with addiction.

- I want to next talk about how integrating our communications and intelligence operations is the very nature of successful collaboration between divisions and local communities.
- The Fusion Center Intelligence Operations group relocated and consolidated with the EMA Watch Desk and Patrol's Hub.
- The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Hub is comprised of the Watch Desk, Intelligence, Statewide Dispatch Management and Threat Assessment and Prevention units.
- The Patrol's Dispatching Operations now also dispatch for the State Fire Marshal's Office, Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Taxation.

- **Patrol Intel Unit analysts received over 10,000 requests in 2016 for the first time ever, representing a 70 percent increase from requests in 2015. In some of those requests, there is no doubt that a life was saved because of the expertise of one of our analysts.**

- **And the Patrol's Aviation assets continue to be a force multiplier not just for state troopers, but for law enforcement agencies across the state. In fact, during 2015 and 2016 Patrol pilots flew 1,208 missions – of those 762 – equivalent to 63 percent of their overall missions – were in support of other agencies.**
- For instance, on July 4, 2015, our Aviation Unit assisted the Stark County Sheriff's Office with their search for a missing 15-year old autistic boy that was missing from his home. Our pilots located the boy on a soccer field behind Lake High School. The boy ran off into the woods, where ground officers and EMS personnel were directed to him and were able to render aid and return him home.

- And Patrol Aviation assisted the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the FBI on July 27, 2015, with their search for an active shooter who had murdered an elderly female earlier in the day. Our pilot located the suspect running in a wooded area. The suspect was taken into custody after an armed confrontation.

- I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to tell you about the outstanding accomplishments from the women and men in the Ohio State Highway Patrol who work every day in every Ohio county to keep our state safe.
- I would now like to introduce my colleague Registrar Don Petit from the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

(Registrar Petit)

- A major goal at the Ohio Department of Public Safety is to reinforce a strong foundation for expedient, cost-effective services to the public.

- **To exemplify how we are achieving that goal, one need look no further than the beginning of this year when the Bureau of Motor Vehicles released the new Automated Title Processing System – known as ATPS – to the Clerks of Courts Title Offices, with little interruption in services.**
- **I want you to know this was an incredible accomplishment. The private sector tried to do this but could not deliver what was needed.**
- **And we promised we would get it completed on time and under budget. This project was successfully implemented in collaboration with our partners.**
- Another example is the BMV’s expansion of customer access to full reinstatement services at all 190 Deputy Registrar license agencies – services which were previously only available at seven locations statewide.
- Through this innovation, customers are now able to reinstate their driver’s license from their home communities and legally operate their vehicle on our roadways.
- And beginning in July, **Ohio will become the first state to pilot the use of simulators in driver testing as part of our Drive Toward a Safer Ohio Initiative.**

- This multi-pronged approach represents the most comprehensive changes to Ohio's driver training, testing and safety efforts ever undertaken by the Ohio Department of Public Safety.
- The end result is Ohio will have the most comprehensive model in the country for driver safety training and testing – particularly youth driving.
- Also at the Ohio BMV, when fully implemented, the complete Drive Toward a Safer Ohio plan will make Ohio a national leader in the way we educate and train novice drivers through Professional Development, Curriculum and Information Delivery, and Enforcement.
- Thank you for the opportunity to share with you ways in which the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles is contributing to a safer Ohio.

(Director Born)

- **That concludes our formal testimony today.**
- Chairman McColley, Ranking Minority Member Reece and Members of the House Finance Transportation Sub-Committee, I again thank you for today's opportunity to testify on behalf of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. Representatives from our senior staff are here, and are available answer any of your questions.

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