Legislative History for Connecticut Act

SB 313 (PA 151) 1998

House 4022-4034 (13)

Senate 6816, 1951-1957, 2035-2037 (11)

Public Safety 20-36, 65-66, 83-90, 93-94, 186 (30)

(54)

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House of Representatives Proceedings

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SB 313 (PA 151) 1998

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CONNECTICUT GEN. ASSEMBLY HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS 1998

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give him a welcome.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

I'm sorry, Madam. You mean he left? I said, I'm sorry. You mean he left?

Are there any other points or announcements? If not, we will return to the Call of the Calendar.

Calendar 524, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

On page 16, Calendar 524, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 313, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE POLICE ACADEMY. Favorable Report of the Committee on Appropriations.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN: (115TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

On acceptance and passage, will you remark, sir?

REP. DARGAN: (115TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill today, I think, is landmark legislation for this House dealing with the problems of personnel within the State Police Department.

Over the past few years the State Police Department has been severely depleted. There's been some concerns about keeping weigh stations open, concerns about the increase in the speed limit, concerns about Megan's Law, concerns in communities to have more resident troopers, concerns to increase patrol divisions on our state highways, and weight and truck safety throughout the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Speaker, this bill moves the State in the right direction for protection of our citizens that rely on public safety on our state roads and the communities that have state resident troopers.

This will increase State Police personnel by approximately 220 by the year 2001 and I move for its adoption.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

On adoption, will you remark? Representative Orange.

REP. ORANGE: (48TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, sir. I rise in support of this bill. We have been depleted as Representative Dargan has noted in our personnel at the State Police. This would benefit my towns and many other towns and I urge passage.

Thank you.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

And thank you, Madam. Representative Cafero. Good morning, sir. Representative Stone. I knew I would get one right eventually.

REP. STONE: (134TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise in strong support of this amendment. I think it's one that we have waited for for a long time. And it will bring a lot of solutions to some of the problems that we're seeing and if we are going to later increase the speed limit in the state, we need to have the manpower to enforce it and to make sure it's done the right way.

So, I urge my colleagues to support this.

Thank you.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Thank you, sir. Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you, a question to Representative Dargan.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Your question, sir.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Representative Dargan, in line 6 it says that the Commissioner shall maintain a minimum of 1,248 sworn State Police officers. What happens if for some reason

he doesn't?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN: (115TH)

Well, I think that's going to be a hard question to answer with early retirements that some of the State Police go through and if there's any early buy-outs with state employees. This is a figure that we would like to see enacted by the year 2001 which was also approved by the Appropriations Subcommittee for the increased funding on that.

I'm sure if he or she, whoever the Commissioner is at that time is a little underneath that staffing level, we ask them to try to keep that at that level because this was the staffing level that the Commissioner would like to see.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think just the way the wording is I think there's also a problem and with that in mind, I have drawn up an amendment and the amendment is LCO Number 4587. Could the Clerk please call and I be allowed -- please call and read?

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Clerk, please call LCO 4587, House "A". Please read, Mr. Clerk. Do we have this amendment before us? We will have to stand at ease for a minute, Representative Prelli while I get the amendment.

Representative Dargan, do you have the amendment, sir? And they are currently being distributed to the Chamber? Proceed, Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Mr. Speaker, I asked that the amendment be read.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Forgive me. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

LCO Number 4587, House "A" offered by Representative Prelli.

In line 6, before "maintain" insert the following: "to the best of his ability."

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Mr. Speaker, I move adoption.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

On the adoption of "A", will you remark?

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Mr. Speaker, in our discussion -- I'm just saying because of early retirements, maybe because of classes not quite out in time, there could be a problem that

they don't maintain a minimum of these numbers and it's just a technical clean up to say that he will attempt to the best of his ability to maintain these.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Thank you, sir. Representative Fusco. It wasn't a willful act, sir. Try again.

REP. FUSCO: (81ST)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ordinarily I would be concerned about the amendment, but I think the amendment is somewhat reasonable and that is because in the 80's the strength of the State Police was much higher. It was 1,100 or 1,200 - I can't recall the exact number and every time a new commissioner came before the Public Safety Committee we would ask them what their strength was. Well, it was supposed to be 1,100 or 1,200, but what happened in the years in the early 90's is the Commissioner started saying, well, it's whatever the General Assembly approves in your budget and that's how we do it now.

And so, in order to cover the square mileage of this state and properly maintain the patrolling of the highways on three shifts, it is necessary for the numbers to go up to a previous strength level at a minimum. I would say that with the added roads and

some of the added areas that we've asked them to participate in, that we need to back to the strength levels of the 80's, but unfortunately, we haven't funded it and we haven't funded the classes to do that.

And so, Representative Prelli's amendment basically gives the Commissioner the leeway in those years and sometimes they are the lean years when the Legislature doesn't give the State Police an extra class. It appears as though we ought to just them run as many classes as they can, but there's always a fiscal note to that until they catch up. But I think it's reasonable.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN: (115TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to the amendment. I think line 16 would show a point an adequate number and maintain a minimum of 1,248 and it answers that question.

I move for rejection of the amendment.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, I will try your minds.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Opposed, nay.

REPRESENTATIVES:

No.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

The nays have it. The amendment is defeated.

Will you remark further on the bill?

Representative Caron.

REP. CARON: (44TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill also.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the 90's we ask many people, many agencies, all of our departments to tighten their belts, to sacrifice. And no group of people have sacrificed more than the troopers of the State Police.

They have done more with less than anyone else throughout the past eight years and this is our attempt to make Connecticut a safer place, to make it a safer environment for the State Police who work on our streets, the resident troopers and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, we knew that they could do the most with the least and that's why we asked them to wait so long. This is an attempt on the part of the General

Assembly to give them their due, to give them their protection, and to make Connecticut safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Santa Maria.

REP. SANTA MARIA: (107TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the bill. It's unfortunate that we have to pass a bill forcing us to address a shortage in manpower instead of just properly funding and providing for the necessary amount of coverage for our State Police and for our state.

Regardless, I would like to commend the State Police, the State Police Union, and a lot of the citizens of Connecticut, mayors, and first selectmen of towns that have State Police resident troopers in their towns and have had to suffer many years of inadequate coverage, possibly risking the lives of our troopers and some of our residents throughout our state over the past several years.

This bill will guarantee the sufficient police coverage for future years to come. It's a good bill. It's a step in the right direction. And I urge everybody to please support this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Concannon.

REP. CONCANNON: (34TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to support this bill enthusiastically.

As House Chair of the subcommittee that does take care of the State Police budget, I do want to say that we have budgeted adequately to achieve this goal of 1,248 in the year 2001.

We have taken into account the possible retirements. We've taken into account the classes. And there will have to be some juggling done to get the number of classes in line because they're bringing on a whole new list of perspective candidates. However, this can be achieved.

I do want to say that we, in the four years that I have chaired this budget, we have adequately funded an appropriate number of classes in the budget, in the budget as approved. But subsequently, changes were made which were out of our hands and which were out of the hands of the Commissioner and for that reason, currently we do not have the appropriate number of sworn personnel. But I would urge everybody to support this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

And thank you, Madam. Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN: (115TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I personally would like to thank Representative Concannon for her work on the subcommittee Appropriations dealing with the Department of Public Safety.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, this bill, when passed, does not give us the right to speed on the State of Connecticut highways. Since I do get a report of all you speeders once a month and you know who you are. So on behalf of the Chair of the Department of Public Safety, we appreciate your support.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Thank you, Big Brother.

Will you remark further? Representative Orange.

REP. ORANGE: (48TH)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Chairman Dargan.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Orange for the second time, your question, Madam.

REP. ORANGE: (48TH)

To Chairman Dargan, yes. Chairman Dargan, are you

talking about me?

REP. DARGAN: (115TH)

You must know that you've been on that list, sorry to say. Through you, Mr. Speaker, Representative Orange.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

If there are no further remarks, staff and guests to the Well of the House. Members, please be seated. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

To to accommodate Polish Day revelers, we will hold the machine open a couple of moments later than usual.

If the members have voted and if your votes are properly recorded, the machine will be locked any minute now. Representative Villano, the machine is still open. Representative Tulisano, the machine is still open. Representative Malone, the machine is still open. Soon to be closed, however, sir, before much more time passes. It's not an idle threat. The machine will be locked.

The Clerk will please take the tally.

Representative Boukus, for what reason do you rise?

REP. BOUKUS: (22ND)

To vote in the affirmative, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Very good, Madam.

The Clerk will please announce that tally.

CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 313, as amended by nothing, in concurrence with the Senate

Total Number Voting	145
Necessary for Passage	73
Those voting Yea	145
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	6

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Well, let's hope the next vote goes a little smoother.

The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk, Calendar 170.

CLERK:

On page 21, Calendar 170, Substitute for House Bill Number 5565, AN ACT CONCERNING THE POSTING OF DRY CLEANING PRICES. Favorable Report of the Committee on

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Senator Jepsen.

SEN. JEPSEN:

Madam President, with your permission, I would like to proceed at this time to marking the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SEN. JEPSEN:

Thank you, Madam President. Page 1, Calendar 71, PR.

Calendar 83, PR.

88, PR.

Page 2, Calendar 89, Substitute for SB311, An Act Increasing the State Minimum Wage. I would ask that it be taken up as an order of the day, the second order of the day.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SEN. JEPSEN:

Calendar 90, Substitute for SB313 I move to the Committee on Appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SEN. JEPSEN:

Calendar 91 is marked Go.

Calendar 92, Substitute for SB306, I move to the

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SEN. DAILY:

Thank you very much, Madam President. What is contained in that amendment that was accepted is what is the substance of the bill and hearing no further objections or questions, I would move it to Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is to refer this item to the Consent Calendar. Without objection, so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Matters Returned from Committee, Calendar Page 15, Calendar 90, correction, Calendar Page 16, Calendar 90, File 48, Substitute for SB313 An Act Concerning the State Police Academy. Favorable Report of the Committees on Public Safety and Appropriations. The Clerk is in possession of three amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Penn.

SEN. PENN:

Thank you, Madam President. I move the acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage of the bill. Will you remark?

SEN. PENN:

Yes. I believe the Clerk is in the possession, any amendments in my name would you withdraw please. I don't know if that takes care of all the amendments, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage of the bill. Will you remark? Senator Penn.

SEN. PENN:

Would we stand at ease one minute, Madam President.

THE CLERK:

Madam President, all amendments previously filed have been withdrawn or not to be called.

SEN. PENN:

Thank you. On the bill itself, since no amendments are being called, Madam President, one of the things I'm very proud of thinking back and my coming in and starting with Public Safety and sharing the Committee and being involved in the process for six years and working very closely with the Department of Public Safety and the State Police, I finally get to keep one of the promises that I made in trying to increase their numbers of being with their, able to do the task at hand.

I'd like to thank the Senate President and the Committee members and the Governor and all those folks who understood what the problems were around the State of Connecticut and the manpower shortage.

And what this legislation does, it creates hundreds of new state police trooper positions. And over the next three years, the bill by the year 2001, the state will have 1,248 new sworn state police officers.

And I know the rest of the states have been crying about the need for the troopers to be in place and up to their fulfillment in carrying out the capacity of their job.

So as of January 1, 1999 and continuing thereafter, they will be maintaining at least 1,150 new sworn state police officers and with that, I would say I'd like to move the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Crisco.

SEN. CRISCO:

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I just want to echo the comments of Senator Penn. I think this is extremely important legislation, Madam President.

Madam President, I strongly believe that if you're going to do something, you should do it as best as possible. And we've been very fortunate to have a high quality of individuals and personnel and high standards in our State Police Department.

I did have the honor last year of spending some time with a state trooper from the Bethany barracks and having different experiences and I was just terrifically impressed with the limited amount of resources that that trooper in the barracks had and the job that they were able to do.

I think this is an outstanding piece of legislation and I comment both sides of the aisle and the Governor's office for making this become a reality. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Sir. Will you remark further? Senator Sullivan.

SEN. SULLIVAN:

Thank you, Madam President. I am pleased that we are here to take this action today and I thank Senator Penn and I thank Senator Crisco as the Chairs of the two committees that have dealt with this most.

Every day in Connecticut, there are troopers who whether on our highways or in the resident trooper

program, put their lives and their careers on the line for every one of us.

And sadly, in recent years, we have not kept our commitment to them, nor to the public safety of our communities and our highways. We have allowed the level of staffing of our state police to slowly but surely erode from a level that guarantees the ability to respond and to respond safely.

The virtue of this legislation will live beyond the budget we hopefully will soon adopt in Connecticut because it commits us to a staged and clear program of finally moving in the right direction, not the wrong direction.

Having seen the staffing levels of the Department decimated, we are now ready with the administration to see those staffing levels restored and to see the commitment given to the safety of every person in this state, but quite frankly, also to the safety of those who serve in our state police who we have been asking to work on too thin a line and to take too many risks and who with this bill we now honor our commitment that they will have the resources they need to continue to serve us as well as they have.

This is an important bill, my friends. And it is one that will be noted for many years as we go forward

in Connecticut. And Senator Penn, you have done extraordinarily well to turn around what has been a bad policy for a very long time.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Sir. Will you remark further? Senator Penn.

SEN. PENN:

Thank you, Madam President. And I also would like to before my voice totally goes, is to thank the subcommittee on Appropriations also for their hard work and making sure it was funded.

And I don't think that anything else needs to be said other than what the President Pro Tem has said about the need and the safety factor because it is the job and the activity of law enforcement to be able to provide adequate and I think that's the underlying word in this situation, adequate safety for the general public.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Senator Penn.

SEN. PENN:

If there's no objection, I would like to place this on the Consent Calendar please.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is to refer this item to the Consent Calendar. Without objection, so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 118, File 104, Substitute for SB498 An Act Protecting the Credit of Utility Customers. Favorable Report of the Committee on Energy and Technology and Judiciary. The Clerk is in possession of two amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Peters.

SEN. PETERS:

Thank you, Madam President. I move the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on passage. Will you remark?

SEN. PETERS:

Thank you, Madam President. What this bill does is bar private municipal electric gas and water utilities, including telephone companies, from reporting a customer's nonpayment to a credit rating agency until the customer is more than 90 days delinquent.

And that providing any information to an agency could result in a violation and is punishable by a fine

Thank you, Sir. The motion before us is to move this item to the Consent Calendar. Without objection, so ordered.

Senator Jepsen.

SEN. JEPSEN:

Thank you, Madam President. This concludes our business for the day. At this time, I would ask that the Clerk call the Consent Calendar. For those who are going to be leaving immediately after the vote, we expect to be in tomorrow. I do not know at this time whether we will be voting on a budget and tax package. If we do, we could be here quite late. If we do not, I would not expect to be very late, though we will be in to run normal business.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, would you announce a roll call vote on the Consent Calendar and then we will read the Consent Calendar before I open the machine.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

Madam President, the Second Consent Calendar begins on Calendar Page 7, Calendar 345, Substitute for SB500.

Calendar Page 8, Calendar 353, Substitute for HB5621.

Calendar 375, HB3334. HB5334

Calendar Page 10, Calendar 390, Substitute for HB5590.

Calendar 397, Substitute for HB5528.

Calendar Page 16, Calendar 90, Substitute for SB313.

Calendar 118, Substitute for SB498.

Calendar 129, Substitute for SB476.

Calendar Page 17, Calendar 169, Substitute for SB567.

Calendar 173, Substitute for SB380.

Calendar Page 18, Calendar 280, Substitute for SB, correction, Calendar 208, Substitute for SB73.

Calendar Page 20, Calendar 264, Substitute for SB426.

Calendar 287, Substitute for SB268.

Calendar Page 21, Calendar 325, Substitute for SB337.

Madam President, I believe that that completes the Second Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Would you once again announce the roll call vote on the Consent Calendar. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk please take a tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar No. 2.

Total number voting, 35; necessary for adoption, 18; those voting "yea", 35; those voting "nay", 0. Those absent and not voting, 1.

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar is adopted. Are there announcements or points of personal privilege at this time? Senator Jepsen.

SEN. JEPSEN:

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE HEARINGS

PUBLIC SAFETY PART 1 1-262

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Good morning. Dr. Lee, there's some blood up here, but Senator Penn tells me it's not his. Can you check the DNA on that?

DR. HENRY LEE: Sure. I will do that.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you.

JOHN CONNELLY: Good morning. My name is John Connelly. I'm the Commissioner of Public Safety. And although there are various Public Safety bills and issues on today's agenda, I'm just here to address SB-313, the State Police Academy.

I have discussed this with the State Police Union on several occasions. The bill calls for a minimum number of sworn officers by July 1, 1999. And that figure is put at 1,150. I'm here to tell you that that number would be impossible to meet by that July 1 date.

For your infor -- and the reasons are simply this. The figures I have is presently there are 973 sworn members in the Connecticut State Police. There is an Academy class ongoing now. That class is scheduled to graduate on July 24 of this year. We anticipate that anywhere between -- hopefully between 65 and 75 graduates. Also, as of August 1, 1998, we estimate there's going to be 10 retirements within the Division of State Police.

That will leave us as of August 1, 1999 with approximately 1,038 sworn members of the Connecticut State Police.

There is a class that's scheduled to begin in August of 1998 with an anticipated graduation date of March 12, 1999, approximately 60 troopers out of that class. That will give us 1,980. We estimate again 10 retirements by June 30, 1999, which takes to one -- approximately 1,088 sworn members.

So there is no way mathematically that the State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police, could come up with the number that would be mandated by this statute.

I will tell you that besides the two -- the class going on and the class that's anticipated to start in August of this year, we do have a new application process. Applications are being received and being reviewed. And hopefully, out of that application pool that we will be able to start another class in the early summer or late spring of 1999.

The department itself has projected positions and where we would like to get by June 30 in the year 2001. I know that sounds far away, but I guess it isn't. In the year 2001, we would like to see the Connecticut State Police up to a sworn personnel level of 1,248. We think with the continued support of the Governor and the continued support of the legislature, we can reach that -- those numbers.

So that's my comments on the particular Bill 313.

REP. DARGAN: Did you have any -- first of all, let me congratulate you on your confirmation--

JOHN CONNELLY: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: -- and officially welcome you on board on behalf of my co-chair and the committee and myself. We're looking forward to working with you.

As with your predecessor, I always wanted myself -- and my co-chair probably can speak for himself on the issue -- to increase that number of State Police. Some people may not think it gets much attention down my area of the state. But it does, particularly being as close as chairman. I understand the committee of cognizance over that area.

But I would treat it somewhat as you -- because of the number and what's fiscally sound, what else for us to do. And as also being chairman of the Sub-committee on Bonding, I was trying to find some of the folks who came before us, particularly in OPM, OFA, what the numbers would be like. And I've asked you several times, too, because I saw several bills. And Steve and I went over several bills.

Everybody wants to put in a bill now for a State Trooper class. But everybody's got all these random different numbers.

Realistically, if we would do a number over the next five years and obtain that goal, would that be something that you would rather see us try to span a specific figure over the next five years rather than try to say a class every year to reach this unattainable goal with you?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, you know, the problem with a specific figure is that because of different variables, the number of people who retire, budgetary restraints, I think the number kind of puts us in a straightjacket.

You know, the goal of the department -- I'm saying it's a goal. There have been studies done about staffing. I've discussed this with people in OPM. We discussed this with the Governor's Office and just in the five weeks that I've been in the position. And we came out with this goal and the goal is about 1200, between 1200 and 1250 troopers. In the five weeks that I've been Commissioner, the biggest question I've received from both the public and --

REP. DARGAN: About 1200 troopers by when, Commissioner?

JOHN CONNELLY: We project by the year -- June of the year 2001.

REP. DARGAN: 2001?

JOHN CONNELLY: One of the things we have to do is expedite the selection process. The selection process -- the class that's in now that started in January of this year, they applied for the position of State Trooper approximately two and a half to two -- two to two and a half years ago. The class that's going to start in August also applied during that same time period.

So one thing I did find out is that the selection process is very laborious. It takes a long time to get a list of people to put in that class because

of --

REP. DARGAN: Is that because of the Internet?

JOHN CONNELLY: Pardon?

REP. DARGAN: Is that because of the Internet now you're using?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, I don't -- the Internet --

REP. DARGAN: Well, that's how you select it.

JOHN CONNELLY: But -- the Internet I'm told is working very well.

REP. DARGAN: Okay.

JOHN CONNELLY: We've got a lot of applicants. We've got minority applicants, female applicants. And nobody seems to have any problem.

REP. DARGAN: You're learning fast. You know what to say.

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, no. I have problems with the Internet. But people who are younger than me and you, Senator --

So I mean that's the estimate. That's what we're looking for. And I'm -- as Commissioner of Public Safety, I'm going to do everything to see that we do have adequate staffing levels. But, again, I realize that that only could be done through the cooperation of the legislature.

REP. DARGAN: Okay. One question, Commissioner. Since the list of State applicants is a three-year -- three-year applicant list, I asked DAS to submit a fiscal impact to me dealing with a two-year list because the process from beginning to end takes about 18 months. Would you be agreeable to maybe to shorten that time frame? Because I think what's happening is that you're getting the people that are on the list that might be maybe not the most qualified but at the bottom of that list, whereas if you have a class every two years -- and I'm not

saying that the people that are on the bottom of that list are not qualified. But what's happening is a number of people are taking other police type jobs, whether it be local or Federal type jobs, because they are not sure if State Police is going to add more personnel.

JOHN CONNELLY: There's no question about it. The selection process is the long one. And I agree with you that we do lose a lot of good people, if you will, because of the length of the selection process. You know, people want to be police officers and they're not going to wait two years to become a member of the Connecticut State Police if they're offered a position in the local police department or a state police department other than Connecticut.

So one of the things I'm going to try to do is to expedite this selection process. And one of the ways we're going to -- one of the things is you have to do background checks on all these people. And one of the proposals within the department is to perhaps bring back some retired troopers for 120 days to have them help out with the background checks. So hopefully that will move the process along a little quicker.

REP. DARGAN: One last question, not really related to this issue. But have the Native American tribes paid us for the police presence at the two casinos as of yet?

JOHN CONNELLY: The last meeting I was at was approximately a week ago. I'm told that the -- I don't want to get the tribes mixed up. The Pequots, Foxwoods, has not. The other tribes -- the other tribe, I'm told, has. There is going to be a meeting next week with the representatives of the tribe to see what the problem is.

That's right. I mean the -- I've been told that -- and it's a considerable amount of money.

REP. DARGAN: But you're in negotiations, though, aren't you, with that?

JOHN CONNELLY: I believe OPM is. We're going to start negotiations.

REP. DARGAN: Okay. I have a couple of questions. While Steve is on -- have you got any questions? Okay.

Let me ask you. Since Steve was on that issue, timewise, now if a trooper is on assignment there at the gaming entity, is that on their own time? Is that on overtime? Because I heard that's also part of our shorting -- shortages? That if somebody's on during -- naturally I understand they're making overtime. God bless them. But if somebody's just taking time to work their overtime and not doing or performing their assigned duties, that causes us some problems. What is the policy governing that?

JOHN CONNELLY: You can tell by my comments in the last couple of weeks which were reported in the paper. I shook up a lot of people who were in the Casino Unit. There are --

REP. DARGAN: Well, I didn't see them. So --

JOHN CONNELLY: There are 42 people -- there are 42 positions in the Casino Unit. Those people just --

REP. DARGAN: 42 positions?

JOHN CONNELLY: 42. There's 40 of those 42 I'm told are staff. The duties of the people in the Casino Unit are to patrol, if you would, the casino floors. Their jurisdiction is limited to the casino floors. Also part of that --

REP. DARGAN: Is this in uniform or out of uniform?

JOHN CONNELLY: They're out of uniform.

REP. DARGAN: Okay.

JOHN CONNELLY: Also part of the Casino Unit or a good part of the Casino Unit does background checks on potential employees, those to be employed by the casino. You know, I think one of the things we

have to look at when we talk about staffing, the concern is the shortage of troopers assigned to patrol, people actually out there doing the patrol work.

One of the things I want to do is look to some of these specialized units, the Casino Unit being one of them, to see if we need that number of personnel in that unit because although the tribes pay for the salaries and the cars and whatever else for those troopers, those are 40 troopers you've taken out of the assigned patrol. So I think that's something we should look at; if 40 is, you know -- who arrived -- who chose 40 to be the number? And whether or not that's the number of troopers needed at the casinos.

REP. DARGAN: I'm glad that you looked at that because that was going to be part of my discussion with you about the numbers of people assigned to that unit. And, also, it's very hard to sell to a committee, even a caucus, that we need to keep increasing numbers when most of the folks are just going to work at a casino. That's a very tough sell. And I really didn't want to air it publicly. But that's been a major problem that I had working with the numbers. Okay. I'm glad to see that you're on that.

JOHN CONNELLY: Mike?

REP. DARGAN: Thank you.

REP. CARON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner, welcome to the Public Safety Committee. I grew up in Danielson, lived there most of my life. My family still lives there. And as you are aware, I'm sure, Danielson, Troop D barracks, is one of the most overworked barracks in the state. And my concern, obviously, is -- you know, and I've always said that the State Police Troopers are -- we've always felt that they can do the most with the least amount of resources over the past -- over the decade of the 90's. It has been very difficult budgetary-wise. And we certainly knew they could do it and they have done

it and done it very well. But it's getting to the point where it's really difficult. I'm very heartened to hear the fact you want to go up to 1200 by 2001.

My question is where do you see the allocation going? Eastern Connecticut being a very dispersed area in terms of population, but then you still have the responsibilities of the casino. And where do you see over the next three years the allocation of troopers going for the most part?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well --

REP. CARON: How is this going to --

JOHN CONNELLY: I believe that the main mission of the Connecticut State Police is to patrol the highways and rural areas of the state of Connecticut. I think that's there -- that's where we should concentrate. That's -- you know, they -- to give that basic police service to people who travel on the highways of Connecticut and also to give that basic police service to towns that don't have organized police forces. So that's where I see these troopers -- that's where I'd like to see the troopers go.

That's why I say I think one of the -- and I know by making this comment I'm not popular with everybody, especially with people who are in these specialized units. But I would like to look at the specialized units. I would also like to look at the sworn personnel who are doing administrative tasks. You know? I mean if you join up in the organization to be a State Trooper, I would think you would want to go out on the roads and be a State Trooper and not shuffle papers back at headquarters. So I would -- I want to look at who is in these administrative positions, that if we could take those people out. It's not necessary to have sworn personnel doing it. Putting them back out on the highways and byways of the state where I think they could best be used.

REP. CARON: Do you see a further expansion of the resident trooper program or would you be more

interested in encouraging municipalities to develop either an auxiliary police force to augment the State Troopers or just an actual police force?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, I know this comment's not going to be popular with a lot of people, either.

REP. CARON: That's all right.

JOHN CONNELLY: But I think -- I think police services, police protection is the primary function of local communities. And I think local communities have to look at their public safety concerns. You know, the State Police cannot do everything. You know, towns that -- there's quite a few towns in Connecticut, I'm told, I've learned, that don't have organized police departments nor do they have resident troopers, but they do rely on the assigned patrols of the Connecticut State Police.

You know, public safety, I believe, is a local issue to begin with. And if some towns feel that their needs are not being met by just the assigned patrols of the Connecticut State Police, then I think they have to go back and talk to their constituents and their taxpayers and say, "Hey, look it. We should get an organized police department or we should get involved in the resident trooper program. But we cannot rely solely on the Connecticut State Police." There's just too much out there to do.

REP. CARON: Thank you, Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman?

REP. DARGAN: Other questions? Representative Fusco.

REP. FUSCO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner, the previously stated authorized strength number of 1150 -- at one time I believe that the department was somewhere near there. Is that something that's written in the statute or is that just a number that we had reached at some point?

JOHN CONNELLY: To my understanding, there is no set statutory or regulatory figure for the number of troopers. The 1150 we hear, I am told and looking at the various analyses that have been done over the past several years -- in 1989, there were 1140-something positions, 48 positions, I believe.

REP. FUSCO: '89?

JOHN CONNELLY: In 1989. That was the high. That was the higher in 1989. What happened, I am told, after -- well, I guess I don't have to be told. I was around in 1989. What happened is there was early retirement and that drove the numbers down. And, also, in the lean years of the early 1980's I believe we went for at least two years without a trooper training class. So, yes, I mean the high was 1150 or so in 1989.

REP. FUSCO: Maybe that's the problem. Maybe we ought to designate an authorized strength for your organization and attempt to attain that goal within a reasonable time frame.

This committee -- this committee, in my 14 years, has authorized many, many trooper training classes. Unfortunately, somewhere else along in the process, Appropriations Committee or elsewhere, they never made it through the process entirely.

How many -- how many sworn officers do you have that are currently not performing their sworn duty but are working in administrative positions?

JOHN CONNELLY: Because of pending disciplinary matters?

REP. FUSCO: Or because of a need.

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, there are sworn officers who have police powers who are working in administrative positions. How many? I can't give you a number. That's one of the things I want to look at. That's one of the things I want to find out.

REP. FUSCO: Well, that's the question I had for you. Maybe what we ought to be looking at is in some of these administrative positions that are being held

down by sworn officers, maybe we ought to look to be hiring civilians who could fulfill that capacity rather than taking the trained trooper and having them in an administrative function that is not necessarily the best use of their training.

JOHN CONNELLY: I agree with you.

REP. FUSCO: Okay. Thank you.

SEN. PENN: Thank you.

Further questions? Representative Tercyack?

REP. TERCYACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner, I'm pleased to meet you. Thank you for being with us here this morning. My question is this. Taking into account your physical facility and the training personnel, how many candidates is it possible to accommodate for training at any specified time? Say your maximum.

JOHN CONNELLY: The class that is in there now that started in January of this year started off, I am told, with 80 individuals. Now they're down to 75. I've been to the Training Academy. I've viewed the facilities over there. To tell you -- to be very honest with you, they're inadequate. There are -- you know, they have 70 people, 75 people in one very large classroom. I think any one of us when we talk about training or education, that is not the optimal number to have 70 people in one class. And smaller classes, better -- more space over there at the Training Academy, I think is needed. And I know there are plans in the big pile of stuff they put on my desk when I fist came in. There are plans in there for some type of modifications or renovations to the Police Academy. But it -- you know, the space is very, very tight over there.

REP. TERCYACK: Commissioner, I appreciate your answer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions? Representative Santa

Maria.

REP. SANTA MARIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Commissioner.

JOHN CONNELLY: Good morning.

REP. SANTA MARIA: Getting back to the Casino Unit for a minute, essentially it sounds like the Pequots or Mashantuckett Pequots are paying for their own private State Police Department in a lot of ways. Would it be something to look at if you were to establish like a resident state trooper program almost there where you would have some sort of a supervisor oversee a number of, let's say, constables or other resources that would be at your disposal to oversee some of that personnel, some of the personnel there?

JOHN CONNELLY: I really don't know. I mean I haven't -- I haven't looked at that. You know, as I said, I just used the Casino Unit as an example, that I think we have to look to see if those troopers, albeit that they're being financed by the tribes, whether or not we want -- if that's the best use of Connecticut State Troopers possible. So I -- to answer your question, I can't. But that's something I'd like to look at.

REP. SANTA MARIA: As far as the specialized units go, are you having a problem with manpower in the specialized units now?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, the specialized units are low. I mean they're not fully staffed. They're not fully manned. You know, because the State Police, like other organizations, we have demands on us. We have mandates. You know? And the question is where do you -- where do you get the personnel, number one? And, number two, when you do get them, where do you put them?

There are many mandates that are passed by the legislature that we have to fulfill regarding certain tasks that State Police Officers, sworn police officers, are required to do.

As I said, my priority is to make sure that the staffing levels for the assigned patrols, the troopers out there on the streets, if you will, are adequate.

REP. SANTA MARIA: Now, you talked about alleviating some of the bureaucratic or administrative functions of some of the personnel within State Police Headquarters -- (Interruption in taping - Changing from Tape 1-A to Tape 1-B) -- State Police organization.

Now, I know that you at one point in time had about 17 Captains within the State Police and you're down to about five. So some of that reorganization has already taken place. And I'm sure that you're going to take an extensive look at how you want to go about that.

But do you see a real need for having Captains and Majors within State Police Headquarters overseeing a lot of the operations or a continued need to have at least some level of supervisory positions that are sworn personnel kept in place and intact?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, as far as the Majors, when I came aboard, there were only two Majors. There's only one Major now. That Major -- well, one of the Majors became a Colonel and the other Major who was at Headquarters was reassigned to head up the Eastern District.

One of the things I think that we should return to is to have Majors, to have three Majors in charge of the three districts. So we're going to have to promote two more Majors at least. Everybody I talked to within the department feels that a Major should be in control of the district.

So they were for a short -- or for a period of time in Headquarters, but now they're being moved back out into the field.

REP. SANTA MARIA: What I'm looking at is, for instance, inside the department you have whatever the administrative -- let's say Western District. You have a Major, Captain, Lieutenant. Would you be

eliminating possibly positions and just have, say, Major -- and I'm just using that as a hypothetical example -- in charge of everything and not necessarily have as many Majors or Lieutenants and Captains?

JOHN CONNELLY: One of the things Colonel Bardelli is doing now, and he's been doing since he's been appointed Colonel/Deputy Commissioner, is looking at the various assignments to see what the needs are. And if he finds the needs in a specific area, we're going to shift our resources. But if there are no needs in a particular area, then we're not going to dedicate the resources to that area.

REP. SANTA MARIA: Thank you, Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. PENN: Senator Lebeau?

SEN. LEBEAU: Mr. Commissioner, good morning.

JOHN CONNELLY: Good morning.

SEN. LEBEAU: Nice to meet you. I know there's no bill on the agenda today or that we're hearing regarding the State Police communications network. And I've read in the paper that that was one of your priorities and that there's work going ahead. Could you -- I know members of this committee, I'm sure, are concerned with this. It's been a long-term concern of the members of the Public Safety Committee and the General Assembly.

Could you give us a very brief update on the progress?

JOHN CONNELLY: Well, it is a concern. In the last five weeks I've learned more about radio systems -- well, I shouldn't say radio systems -- communication systems than I ever cared to know.

You know, it's a big issue. Everybody's concerned about it. The -- it's moving forward. There was a meeting of the committee last week. I told them that whatever they do, we want to do it quickly.

We don't -- you know, this matter has to be expedited. It's been sitting around for too long.

Briefly, there are two companies out there who provide these systems. They've submitted bids. I learned also a lot of new terminology, too. RFP's and PDQ's and whatever else is out there. They're all being looked at, believe me. When I talked to the Governor about taking this job, one of the things he told me I was going to have to learn about is the radio system. So he's concerned about it. I'm concerned about it. And, believe me, I will do all I can to expedite this matter.

As far as anything else, I mean I really -- I mean there's a committee there. They've been working on it. They're working on it. I've told them that we wanted to get this done. And, hopefully, at some point in time in the very near future this system will be up and running. I don't want to give you a date because I gave -- when I was in the job four days, I gave the Bonding Committee a date and then I was told after I gave that date it was -- it was the wrong date.

SEN. LEBEAU: Fred will hold it to you.

JOHN CONNELLY: Pardon?

SEN. LEBEAU: Representative Jelsi will hold you to that date.

JOHN CONNELLY: I write him letters now.

SEN. LEBEAU: I appreciate your honesty. I appreciate -- I've heard that you're a man of your word. I appreciate that you will move ahead with this. It has -- everybody is concerned about this and everybody wants to move ahead with this as expeditiously as possible.

JOHN CONNELLY: Let me just say this. You know, radios are a key factor in trooper safety out there. And as I've said before, my top priority in this job is trooper safety. I don't want to endanger anyone's life, especially members of the Connecticut State Police. The radio system that we have now is

capable of doing that because of various blackout areas within the state. And that troubles me as a law enforcement official and it troubles me as being -- having friends out there who are placed in that situation. So, again, all I could tell you is I'll do the best I can to move this project along.

SEN. LEBEAU: And as you took this job, I've read your priorities. And let me compliment you in saying I think your priorities are in the right place. Thank you.

SEN. PENN: One final, three-second question. I -- just so we're -- and I should have asked Chief Salvatore or somebody else who was here. Right now, the communication does exist and all allowing for inter-city communication, particularly in the areas of pursuit. So there's no reason that a town can't notify another town of any -- of a pursuit that's taking place or an officer can't notify another town that a pursuit will possibly be going through his or her town. Is that correct?

JOHN CONNELLY: That's my understanding.

SEN. PENN: Okay.

JOHN CONNELLY: I mean I -- again, I don't know all the details of everybody's radio system.

SEN. PENN: Well, if one of the Chiefs, too, would want to just speak on that? I just want to make sure when we're going to say we have communication blackouts, as far as I know, we already have systems in place. And from every part of my checking there are systems in place and there is no reason, mechanical reason or technological reason, why there cannot be communication between cars and any other town that a pursuit is engaged in. Is that correct?

JOHN CONNELLY: Senator Penn, honestly, I can't tell you that. Mr. Bailey is here. He's my mentor. He may know.

SEN. PENN: Okay. All right. As far as you know, as far as the State Police, there is not a problem.

JOHN CONNELLY: That's my understanding.

SEN. PENN: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Santa Maria.

REP. SANTA MARIA: To follow up on Senator Penn's question there, currently the State Police cannot by radio communicate with every single police department in our state nor can most of the police departments by car to car contact other departments within the state. You can call on the telephone from the dispatch center within your particular police department or State Police barracks to that other department to let them know the pursuit's going on. But there's no real radio communication. Correct?

JOHN CONNELLY: That is correct.

REP. SANTA MARIA: Thank you. There's a hot line. It's called the hot line.

SEN. PENN: There's a hot line.

REP. SANTA MARIA: As opposed to, I guess, the cold line.

REP. DARGAN: Commissioner, do you have any comments on any other bills?

JOHN CONNELLY: There are people from the Department of Public Safety --

REP. DARGAN: Okay.

JOHN CONNELLY: -- who are here --

REP. DARGAN: Dr. Lee?

DR. HENRY LEE: Yes.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you, Commissioner, for your comments.

DR. HENRY LEE: Senator Penn, Representative Dargan and honorable Committee members, my name is Dr. Lee. SB 220

DENNIS O'NEIL: Chairman Penn, Chairman Dargan, good afternoon. My name is Dennis O'Neil. I am the Legislative Director for the new AFSCME Council 4. I'm here today representing 35,000 State and municipal employees very briefly to touch base with you on Raised Bill 314 and 313.

With respect to Raised Bill 314, I'd like to bring to the attention of the Committee that an exact duplicate of this bill is wending its way through the Labor Committee. A hearing, a public hearing, has been held on this matter. This bill was held when they went to JF this bill. I would urge the Committee, perhaps so that -- we strongly support the idea behind this bill and would like to see it go forward. We're very concerned that having two bills on a parallel track, one with substitute language that's different than the other, may cause this bill to bog down. So we urge the Committee to confer with the Chairs of the Labor Committee on this one. We wouldn't wish to kill it, sir.

With respect -- and, again very briefly, with respect to Raised Bill 313, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE POLICE ACADEMY, as you can see with this bill, the language in the bill would require the Department of Public Safety to maintain a minimum of 1150 sworn State Police personnel.

I represent individuals who work as dispatchers for the State Police. One of my members who works in the Canaan barracks and lives in that neck of the woods was planning on coming in this morning to testify with respect to this bill and her concerns about the under-staffing of the civilian personnel which is causing a problem. She did not feel -- and to be very brief, she's got a foot of snow in her yard. She could not get out of her house this morning to come before this Committee. She faxed to my office a copy of her testimony that she was to give. I'm going to prepare this and submit it to the Committee for your review.

But, essentially, her contention is that the dispatchers and other civilian personnel are terribly under-- the positions are under-filled at the moment and this undermines the ability of the

troopers to do their job, and to require a minimum staffing of 1150 State Troopers without filling the support positions, the logistical positions, perhaps will not result in the public -- the improvements in public safety that this Committee would hope to see.

So I shall get this typed up in a more presentable form and present it to the Committee for your review. But I hope you will consider the necessary staffing level to the civilian personnel who work for Public Safety as a logistical support to the actually sworn law enforcement officers.

I thank you very much for your time, your consideration. And if you have any questions, I'd be delighted to try to answer them.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you.

Representative San Angelo.

REP. SAN ANGELO: Thank you.

Dennis, a question with regard to 314. Are current police officers, correction officers, fire fighters tested for all of these things at the time of hire?

DENNIS O'NEIL: I cannot answer that question but would be delighted to answer it. And I -- and the only one I could answer for would be corrections officers. I don't represent the other --

REP. SAN ANGELO: The concern that --

DENNIS O'NEIL: There's a No coming from somewhere.

REP. SAN ANGELO: Yes. The concern I would have, and I guess what I want your position on, is that if these employees are currently not tested at the time of hire --

DENNIS O'NEIL: Right.

REP. SAN ANGELO: -- would make that a mandatory requirement that they all be tested before being allowed to be hired? Obviously, I think there's a

existing, would be grandfathered in and left alone.

DAVID AHEARN: That's correct.

SEN. SCARPETTI: So that you cannot expand --

DAVID AHEARN: Expand. That's correct.

SEN. SCARPETTI: -- without approval of all these other (inaudible - not using microphone).

REP. DARGAN: Any other questions? Any other questions?

Hearing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

Next speaker is Bob Veach.

BOB VEACH: Good afternoon, Senator Penn, Representative Dargan, members of the Public Safety Committee. I'm before you today to testify in favor of two bills; firstly, SB 313, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE POLICE ACADEMY; secondly, SB 314, and that would be the bill on testing for police officers or correctional officers and fire fighters for the HIV, TB and hepatitis that was discussed earlier.

Firstly, I'd like to expand on the ACT CONCERNING THE STATE POLICE ACADEMY and let you know that this is the third legislative session that I have been before this Committee to testify in favor of automatic Academy classes. SB 313

I don't know if this Committee will support automatic Academy classes. But I ask sincerely that you do support the number of 1150 as the optimum level of the State Police force. And that's in the wording of the bill before you.

I know the Commissioner of Public Safety, John Connelly, was here earlier, saying that he supported the concept of increasing the staffing levels for the State Police. And I think him for that testimony. And he did say that it would be impossible to attain the level of 1150 by July 1, 1999. And that is also true because of the testing

process. It's a lengthy process.

However, I believe that unless this Committee would support a number in a bill such as 1150 or, as the Commissioner says, he would like to attain a level of 1248 by the year 2001, then we will never, ever catch up and we'll never increase the level substantially of the State Police as it should be.

Unless we have automatic Academy classes or OPM is held to a number saying that if the State Police ever get below a certain level, then they will start an Academy class forthwith, then we will always be playing catch-up and I would suspect that I will be before you for three more years and maybe three years after that asking for more manpower.

It's not that expensive to put troopers through -- the Connecticut State Police is less than one percent of the overall State budget, Personnel Services.

At this point, as you know, we have two casinos in the state which has dedicated approximately 43 State Police troopers. They go towards our authorized strength. I know that the Commissioner testified that we have a total sworn of 1,048 at this time. He included the 75 trooper trainees that are in class right now and will not be doing law enforcement functions until at least September of this year. Also, there are 20 troopers at the Bradley International Airport. They do not provide services to the general citizens of Connecticut, only at the Bradley airfield. And Foxwoods Casino has 29 dedicated troopers and Mohegan Casino has 13. These go towards out authorized strength. And that brings us to 1,048.

Unless that's corrected, those numbers will never be increased, although, as you know and this Committee knows, the troopers that are working for the casinos and Bradley International Airport do not come under the same funding as do the troopers that are patrolling the roads.

And lastly, just so you know, when I say there's 911 troopers, we, the State Police have a variety

of functions, not just uniform. At any given time throughout the state of Connecticut, there are less than 100 troopers patrolling the entire state. That's out of 911 because we have so many specialized units, gang units, narcotics units, the Statewide Narcotics Task Force. Those types of units take up a lot of personnel and they're very much needed in the state. They're at bare bones now. The Criminal Investigative Units are at bare bones. And just recently the State's Attorney of Windham County wrote a 10-page letter to the Governor saying that his function as a State's Attorney has been hampered because of investigations or the lack of investigations strictly related to the lack of manpower at Troop B in Danielson.

And I thank you and I hope that you support this bill and get it through committee. And I'll answer any questions that you may have.

SEN. PENN: Thank you, Bob. Let me just ask you one question here. You were in the room when the Commissioner, obviously, was testifying. And one of the concerns that we have -- at least I know I had. And as Chairman for the last six years here, I've always -- being on the committee that length of time, we've always talked about strengthening the police, State Police.

But just you mentioned that you're being under-manned because of specialization. But isn't that by choice? And then, again, if you talk about going and putting these special units, 40 people or 39, whatever, 38, whatever number that you gave out, with the gaming casinos, isn't that by choice? I mean there's no legislative mandate that's saying you have to specialize in every activity. But even if you are specializing, that number would still be part of the overall force. And shouldn't the administrator of the department disseminate those forces where he or she thinks it's necessary to go? So just because you specialize, you know -- there's no act upon the legislature to say that we have to give you 1,000 more people. And then you specialize collecting ants or specialize doing this. I believe that there's some specialization

of the State Police that should be transpiring. But to have a unit of 40 police officers at the gaming and then come back before the legislature and say, "We're totally under-manned and we can't take care of the highway", isn't there something a little distorted in that picture?

BOB VEACH: I believe that there is a pact -- I know there's a pact with the casino that the law enforcement, primary law enforcement, has to be done by the Connecticut State Police. And that's why, therefore, we have those troopers in there doing that. So we're mandated by providing that law enforcement. Certainly we need the manpower to do that.

And some of the other units, like the gang units, there is mandates that we do that type of law enforcement, also. I'm not sure -- I know there's like 18 different units within the State Police. I'm not sure how many --

SEN. PENN: I'm not questioning your specialization. I'm just saying you're asking almost like don't count that as part of your manpower. I mean if you're going to specialize in certain things, obviously you have to have adequate manpower in order to specialize. I would hope that would be the decision-making process of the commanders before you do it.

BOB VEACH: Right.

SEN. PENN: Wouldn't that be correct? So if we wanted to take some of these officers, for instance, out of a gaming unit -- I guess that's more lucrative in that area with the overtime and stuff. But -- I don't fault them for that. But I'm just saying if you've got 40 people over there and you know definitely that you need to have more people on the highway, don't you think that's the command decision that should be done? And shouldn't the legislature -- if they're going to be supportive of the command, watch how they disseminate the manpower and make sure it's done adequately to support the concept of the State Police in the first place? If it's a gang unit -- I'd rather see

more people on the gang units than before a casino, quite frankly.

BOB VEACH: Right. And I think the Commissioner would agree that it takes a certain amount of troopers in those units to perform the function that's required. And I believe they're at bare bones at the casino, also, in regards to -- they have a tremendous amount of background investigations.

And just to clarify, I know some legislators think that the troopers on the outside of the casinos doing traffic duty is dedicated to the casino. And that's not correct. Those troopers are -- that's on their day off. They're doing that as extra assignment. The troopers that do work the casinos are in plainclothes inside in a jacket and tie who you probably wouldn't recognize if you were walking around. They do the enforcement on the floors of the casino.

So I understand what you're saying, also; that certainly we need a level -- we have to attain a level to be able to provide the services for all these units. Most importantly, though, my concern as union president is that the road always seems to suffer the most. The uniform troops are down to bare bones and those are the troopers who are generally -- they have the toughest job. They're in the most hazardous part of the State Police duty in that they get assaulted. They don't have any backup when they call for it. And many of the communities don't have their own police departments and require the State Police to provide that function.

SEN. PENN: But isn't it just a problem in just -- if it's just an area of logistics on some of these things, because you're saying that the casino is still under-manned at 40 and you have the Director of -- Commissioner of Public Safety saying that he think it's too much and you're saying it's not enough. In order for him to move folks from the casino into an area of more, higher visibility, isn't it just logistics and he has the authority to make that decision where he thinks, as you're saying, because you say there's less visibility on

the road -- don't you think that's his prerogative for him to do that?

BOB VEACH: Absolutely. I mean I -- the road is certainly number one. And the Commissioner has the ability to transfer people as he wishes. Although, I do know that they do have to maintain some kind of presence in the casino. I believe there's a problem -- and I don't know if this Committee knows that the Mashantuckett Pequots have failed to pay their bill for the --

SEN. PENN: We know. Chairman Dargan spoke on that already.

BOB VEACH: And that may be part of the reason why the commissioner is frustrated and would like to pull those troopers out. And I don't blame him. If he's -- if they're not paying for the services they're required to pay for, then maybe the troopers shouldn't be there.

SEN. PENN: Well, he didn't say all casinos. He said there was one. And then he was moving onto something.

BOB VEACH: Right.

SEN. PENN: Senator Scarpetti?

Thank you.

SEN. SCARPETTI: Trooper Veach, to get back to the shortage of troopers, when was the last class?

BOB VEACH: They have a class in right now. Prior to that --

SEN. SCARPETTI: Prior to that.

BOB VEACH: Prior to that was about 18 months prior to that.

SEN. SCARPETTI: 18 months. And that class consists of 80 personnel?

BOB VEACH: The one before was 80. This one's about 75.

We graduated 80. This one that's in now has 75 and hopefully we'll graduate between 70 and 75 in July of this year.

SEN. SCARPETTI: And this class will graduate when?

BOB VEACH: Late June, early July of this year.

SEN. SCARPETTI: So it's a six-month --

BOB VEACH: Yes. And they won't be ready for law enforcement duties until probably August or September because they have to go into field training after that.

SEN. SCARPETTI: Now, just stay with me for a minute. Now, if we take a class in January and that graduates in six months and they're not ready until August, would you like to have another class then continue right after that class graduates?

BOB VEACH: Yes.

SEN. SCARPETTI: Is that what you're talking about?

BOB VEACH: Yes.

SEN. SCARPETTI: A continual --

BOB VEACH: Because it takes six months. And then if they started one in August, they certainly wouldn't graduate until February of '99. And that would go a long way into helping us out, certainly. And I know the Commissioner wants to start another class immediately after this one. But there are only, I guess, 60 eligible individuals on the list that they have, the active list that they have.

They have a testing process in place now that they -- the date is March 6 for closing for that test. They have approximately 5,000 people so far that have expressed interest in the job.

The problem is -- and the Commissioner understands this -- that the testing process itself, DAS says that it takes 18 months. It's been our experience that it's two years or over before -- by the time

they close the date for a written test to the time they start an Academy class is two years because of all the phases. And there are ways to reduce that. But DAS gets overwhelmed with the testing process for Connecticut trooper because it's such a long process.

SEN. SCARPETTI: But then you feel that if we have this continuous class of troopers coming in -- and you do have people on the waiting list. So it isn't a pie in the sky thing, in other words.

BOB VEACH: Right. There's people available now to go into another Academy class in August if we could get the funding for it. I believe there may be funding for that. But what's going to happen is I think the Commissioner would also admit that in -- before June of 1999, we're going to lose probably another 80. We attrit normally 40. But we're going to lose between 80 and 100 because that's when we lose 100-percent medical coverage. We're going to -- the troopers who are on the job after (Interruption in taping - changing from Tape 2-A to Tape 2-B.)-- of 1999 are going to pay a co-pay towards their medical when they retire and when they're on the job.

SEN. SCARPETTI: Okay. So that (Interruption in taping)--

REP. SAN ANGELO: I'm sorry, Bob. I missed it early on and I -- are you the President of the Police Union? Exactly what are you?

BOB VEACH: Yes, sir. I'm the President of the State Police Union and, also, I'm a trooper.

REP. SAN ANGELO: Okay. Bob, going back to 314 -- and the more I read this bill, the more confused I get by it. You -- again, I think you said that your union supports the bill. And you didn't elaborate at all after that. I don't know if that was because of the last conversation or not.

But I'm looking at the bill again and again I have another question that leads me to wonder if you guys want to be supporting this bill. As I read

time instead of the baseline testing. So I'd ask you to talk to the Public Health Committee, too, to make sure that you're not limiting liability for your guys, also. Okay? Because I think that really is an issue the way it's written and with what Public Health is saying. So I'd appreciate some written comments to those questions.

BOB VEACH: We'll do some more research on that and get back to you.

REP. SAN ANGELO: All right. Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions?

REP. SANTA MARIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SB 313

Bob, I think the Commissioner testified to 973 sworn, but that's apples and oranges. Anyway, I'm going to ask you the same question I asked him. In the casino unit, I don't know if the pact can be modified or not. Would you be supportive of setting up something similar to a Resident State Trooper program there where you would have essentially constables or their police, sworn personnel, essentially working under, say, a Sergeant or a Lieutenant, a Resident State Trooper type program?

BOB VEACH: At the casino, did you say?

REP. SANTA MARIA: Right.

BOB VEACH: There was some talk of that. And certainly I would support that because the State Police have to have a presence there. And if it was done in that fashion with Resident Troopers, that would be fine, also.

REP. SANTA MARIA: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Caron.

REP. CARON: Hi, Bob. I asked the Commissioner earlier as he goes up to the 1250 manpower by -- in the next three years, where he sees the allocation. He decided not to answer the question. He talked

about something else. Where does the union see the allocation, the necessary allocation of that kind of increase in manpower over the next three years?

BOB VEACH: I think that it will constantly have to be brought in front of the Appropriations Committee to get the money for additional classes. However, if --

REP. CARON: Well, assuming that that happens, I mean the plan -- I think -- let's assume the plan is going to go forward that we're going to go up to 1250 by about 2001. My question is where is the union seeing the need, the necessity for the allocation of those additional troopers throughout Connecticut?

BOB VEACH: Well, definitely on patrol.

REP. CARON: On patrol where specifically? Litchfield County? Fairfield County? Hartford County?

BOB VEACH: Most importantly, I believe any barracks that has towns that they have to patrol that don't have their own police departments. Those are the -- those are the areas that are suffering the most. Like up in Danielson's area, they have 12 towns that don't have their own police departments. So certainly they need more --

REP. CARON: But many of them do have Resident Troopers.

BOB VEACH: Right. Who only work day shift.

REP. CARON: Okay.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions?

Hearing none, thank you very much.

BOB VEACH: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Next speaker is Jack Bailey.

JACK BAILEY: Thank you very much. And I'm going to be very, very brief. I'm here to speak on Raised Bill SB 350. And just a remark. I want to thank

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE

February 24, 1998

Senator Alvin E. Penn
Representative Stephen Dargan
Co-Chairmen, Public Safety Committee
Legislative Office Building - Room 3600
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Raised Bill #313 - Am Act Concerning The State Police Academy

The Department of Public Safety agrees with the concept of increasing the number of sworn personnel within the Division of State Police. We will strive to reach a level of 1248 by the year 2001 as presented to the Appropriations Sub-Committee on February 20, 1998. The goal of 1150 persons by July 1, 1999 would be impossible to attain.

We have just begun another series of testing which traditionally takes upwards of 18 months to realize a pool of candidates for a class of 80.

Very truly yours,

John A. Connelly
COMMISSIONER

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