

## Law Enforcement Event

### Overview:

- 20% pay raise for 3,314 state-level law enforcement, representing:
  - \$26,330,245 from AFY 2017
  - \$52,660,490 from FY 2018
  - Total: \$78,990,735 for salaries
  - All on top of the 6% pay raise for troopers included in this current fiscal year's budget
- Multi-phase training overhaul:
  - Additional training hours for annual POST certification
  - Enhancement of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)
    - 40-hour, 5-day program currently administered by GBI.
    - With its limited capacity, the training has been completed by only about 9,500 of the almost 57,000 sworn state and local law enforcement officers in Georgia.
    - Moving CIT to Georgia Public Safety Training Center, allowing for local access to the program from Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices.
    - **[N.B. Will require additional resources and state funding to meet increased demand once the transfer has occurred]**

In every State Constitution adopted since the 1860s in Georgia, there has been a recurring phrase deemed so important that it is placed toward the very beginning. The most recent State Constitution, adopted in 1984 when I was in the State Senate, enumerates this right in these words: "Protection to person and property is the paramount duty of government and shall be impartial and complete. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws" **[Article I, Section I, Paragraph II]**.

While that right to protection of both person and property has not changed in the 155 years **[originally in Constitution of 1861]** since it first appeared in the foundational document of all other laws in this state, much else has. Government's responsibility to provide protection has not changed, but the demands of fulfilling this fundamental right have.

That is what we are here today to address.

Let me first thank:

- Lt. Gov. Cagle
- Speaker Ralston
- The members of Gen. Assembly
- The agency directors present
- The state law enforcement officers represented here today,
- And our various public safety agencies:
  - Dept. of Public Safety

- Newly formed Dept. of Community Supervision, tasked with employing evidence-based practices to hold offenders accountable and reduce the state's recidivism rate.
- Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- Dept. of Corrections
- Dept. of Juvenile Justice
- Dept. of Natural Resources
- GPSTC
- POST
- Pardons and Paroles

We ask our law enforcement personnel of all levels and ranks to do a very difficult job, one that requires great skill, long suffering, and dedication of purpose. These brave and caring men and women that are all around us today go out each shift to face uncertainty and danger so that their neighbors may not have to. And while their jobs have only become more difficult and dangerous year after year, the thanks they receive has not kept pace. We have seen in cities across the country the need to foster and strengthen the ties and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Because protecting citizens – both those who do not wear a badge and those who do – is “the paramount duty of government,” it is incumbent upon us to provide the training and resources that they need to be the many things that beloved commentator Paul Harvey said those in law enforcement are asked to be: “a minister, a social worker, a diplomat, a tough guy and a gentleman.”

And so today, I am introducing a law enforcement reform proposal consisting of two parts.

Budgetary:

The first involves compensation for those who are selfless and courageous enough to don a vest and uniform each day. Beginning January 1 of 2017, all state law enforcement personnel will receive an across-the-board pay raise of 20 percent.

This is on top of the six percent pay increase that I asked the General Assembly to approve this past year.

There are at least 3,314 personnel of the GBI, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, and the Departments of Natural Resources, Public Safety, Community Supervision, Corrections, and Juvenile Justice will be affected by this increase. In total, we will devote almost \$79 million [**\$78,990,735 to be exact, starting Jan. 1 with \$26,330,245 in AFY17**] between the AFY 2017 and the FY 2018 budgets for the salaries of these individuals in an irrefutable demonstration that we put our money where our priorities are.

Currently, eight local law enforcement organizations pay their entry-level officers more than the starting salary for a state trooper. Once this overdue increase goes into effect at the beginning of the calendar year, GSP troopers will have the highest base salary of any

law enforcement personnel in the state, **[going from \$38,685 a year to \$46,422, \$36,495 before the 6 percent increase earlier this year]**.

This will also move our troopers up from 6<sup>th</sup> highest paid in the Southeast to 3<sup>rd</sup> **[behind Louisiana and Texas]**. After this pay raise takes effect, our troopers will have gone from 40<sup>th</sup> nationally in terms of base salary to 24<sup>th</sup> – quite a considerable jump. In the past, we were training the best and brightest, but paying them the least. Well, no longer will that be the case.

And those are just our troopers. The salaries of our DNR conservation rangers and officers, motor carrier compliance officers, capitol police officers, GPSTC public safety trainers and investigators, POST investigators, GBI agents, DCS and Corrections personnel, and probation officers will be similarly affected, making them competitive not only in the Southeast, but nationally as well.

I think the agency heads gathered here will agree with me that these new compensation measures will go a long way in recruiting and retaining the talent we need on the frontlines of public safety, showing our commitment to and appreciation for their selflessness. But it is just one step on a broader path that I have asked other state officials and those in the fields you see represented among us to review.

#### Training:

The second component of this proposal involves an overhaul of how we train both state and local authorities who have the power to make arrests, providing the tools needed to build relationships within their respective communities.

Earlier this year, my office worked with the Georgia Public Safety Training Center to evaluate the training all POST-certified law enforcement undergo in our state. Today, we will share with you the ways in which we will improve the quality and depth of that training in the coming weeks, months and years through three phases.

#### **Phase 1 – Expanded Training**

Phase 1 involves expanding the list of specific training courses required by the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, which all law enforcement who have the capability of making an arrest must complete each year. We are increasing the number of courses that will be required for certification under the “Police Legitimacy, Procedural Justice and Community Relations” curricula established by the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. In addition to the 11-week training program, 2 courses will be added, and one of these courses will be an elective chosen by the trainee. Officers will be able to pick from course options with the following titles:

- Use of Force and De-escalation Options for Gaining Compliance,
- Fostering Positive Community Relations
- Introduction to Cultural Competency in Policing, and
- Police Legitimacy, Procedural Justice, and Community Relations

## **Phase 2 – Streamlining Services, Increasing Access**

Phase 2 involves the expansion and enhancement of Crisis Intervention Training for law enforcement. To give Georgia's civilians a little background, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, in conjunction with the Georgia Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, developed the Crisis Intervention Training program in 2004. This program, which is standardized across the country, is designed to equip officers with the knowledge and skills to approach crises involving individuals with mental disorders.

Since its inception, the GBI has trained roughly 9,500 of its officers in this 40-hour, 5-day program. As you know, addressing how law enforcement approach dangerous situations with those suffering from mental health problems is a topic of growing national concern, and those on the local level are increasingly requesting such training. For that reason, we will transfer this program to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center so that it can be available to the almost 57,000 sworn state and local law enforcement officers in our state.

## **Phase 3 – Formation of Task Force to Review & Recommend**

Lastly, in Phase 3, my office will form a task force comprised of law enforcement officials, legislators and community leaders to examine the Basic Law Enforcement Officer Training Course and establish competency-based standards for any course revisions deemed appropriate. Teaching to a competency-based standard will better prepare officers to address the challenges of policing in a modern society by emphasizing both the critical thinking and tactical skills needed in today's environment. In the coming weeks, my office will compile a list of those who will serve on this task force and share it with you as soon as it is completed.

All that I have shared with you today is designed to honor the state law enforcement officers who wear a badge and vest and to make both the protection they provide and their own protection "impartial and complete," as our Constitution requires. And so I want to say to those who have filled this Capitol today, on behalf of all Georgians – thank you. I don't think there is a person in this building who is not humbled by your service... by the courage you display on a regular basis... and by the inspiring principles your respective uniforms and insignias represent.

That's why I want you to know that we hear you, we know the difficulties you face in carrying out your substantial duties, and we want to do whatever is in our power to support you as you walk your individual paths of service. Please, do not leave here today before I get the chance to shake each and every one of your hands. Let me thank you personally for what you do for us and what you give on behalf of our citizens.