

POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

of the NEW YORK STATE TROOPERS, INC.



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The safety and wellbeing of New York State Troopers who put themselves at risk every day in service to their mission of protecting residents and visitors across this state is paramount. I am sure you agree that our primary responsibility is to do everything in our power to ensure the members of this force are well-trained, prepared, protected, and supported to minimize risk as much as possible as they engage in what is inherently a dangerous job.

ANDREW G. DELMAR
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RICHARD I. CUNNINGHAM
Troop E Delegate

It is with this in mind that I'm writing to express my deep concern about a recent incident involving the assault of a training instructor by a State Police recruit at the academy at Cazenovia College on July 23, 2024. Since this incident occurred, PBA members have raised questions about whether recent changes to recruitment and hiring standards may have allowed a clearly unqualified candidate to slip through the screening process, ultimately putting his instructor, his fellow recruits, and potentially even members of the public, in harm's way.

PAUL J. CATRONA
Troop F Delegate

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JOSHUA P. KAYE
Troop NYC Delegate

My members understand perhaps better than anyone the stress of the prolonged labor shortage. They experience in real time the pressures resulting from low recruitment numbers. We also support ongoing efforts to diversify our ranks and recognize that our relationship with the community will be stronger as a result.

ANTHONY NIGRO IV
Troop T Delegate

JOHN J. CONBOY
NCO West Delegate

JOSHUA J. TAYLOR
NCO East Delegate

DANIEL J. HOLLANDS
Officers Delegate

FREDERICK W. SCHEIDT
Retiree Liaison

We believe action must be taken to address these staffing issues and understand the reasoning behind eligibility changes publicly announced by the Division of State Police and Executive Chamber. That includes increasing the maximum age for recruits, making investments to expand the number of academy classes and training locations, and being intentional about recruiting more women and people of color to join our ranks.

But we are concerned that some of the tactics employed to broaden the pool of applicants have gone too far, such as the relaxing of standards for physical fitness,

background checks, and mental health reviews. Reports that the agency is forced to reach ever deeper into the list of civil service test takers are equally concerning.

We must ensure that only the most dedicated and qualified New Yorkers are given the responsibility to protect and serve as State Troopers. This is vital not only to ensure that all Troopers have a safe workplace, but also that members of the public receive the quality law enforcement services they need and deserve. Clearly, the current system failed in weeding out the recruit involved in the July 23rd incident. My members deserve answers about how that happened and what steps are being taken to ensure it does not happen again.

To that end, I am requesting that Division leaders provide a full accounting of recent changes made to the standards that recruits must meet regarding their physical fitness, mental fitness, background checks, and other qualifying factors before being accepted as part of an academy class.

In addition, I am requesting transparency about how New York State Civil Service Exam scores have been factored into the application process historically, the historical average score of applicants accepted into the academy, the full range of scores of applicants accepted into the most recent classes of recruits, and what changes have been made to how the scores are utilized in accepting applicants.

Like law enforcement agencies across the state and nation, the State Trooper ranks have been depleted and demoralized over the past half-decade following a change in how the nation views our profession. Nationwide, assaults on officers in the field continue to rise, [according to a recent FBI report](#). As pressures from the outside mount, we shouldn't have to worry about attacks that might come from within.

The State Police is understaffed, which puts my members unnecessarily at risk and undermines our mission to protect and serve. I'm sure you appreciate the need to attract dedicated, qualified staff who fit our rigorous criteria.

I believe that if you are transparent with my members and the public about all changes to the recruitment criteria, we can work in partnership to ensure only the best of the best are bestowed with the significant responsibilities all Troopers bear. The Division of State Police, the PBA and our communities will all benefit from a transparent and clear process, and I would appreciate your immediate attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Murphy
President
Police Benevolent Association of the New York State Troopers