

Remarks of Attorney General Paula T. Dow
Attorney General's Budget Testimony
1 p.m. April 11, 2011
Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee
State House Annex, Trenton

- Thank you Chairman Sarlo, Vice-Chairman Stack and members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.
- It is my pleasure to be here this afternoon, and to have the opportunity to address the committee.
- As you know, I have served as Attorney General for more than a year now.
- In that time I have come to appreciate more each day the scope of the department's mission, and the way it impacts on people's lives.
- I welcome the chance to discuss with you our work, and to talk about our department's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year.

- Accompanying me today are First Assistant Attorney General Phillip Kwon, Executive Assistant Attorney General Marc Ferzan, Chief of Staff Deborah Edwards, Administrator Howard McCoach, Budget Director Kristen Fischer and other key members of the Law and Public Safety management team, including the directors of our various Divisions and Commissions.
- Let me begin by acknowledging what everyone in the room understands -- that our state, like the rest of the nation, continues to confront difficult economic realities.
- Governor Christie has asked every department to manage its money the way millions of New Jersey residents must manage their own – by setting priorities and looking for ways to stretch a dollar.
- We fully endorse this approach.
- That is why we've engaged in a thorough self-examination as a department – an examination in which we've reviewed the core mission of each division, as well as its management structure, staffing levels, technology and other issues.
- The result has been an ability to operate with greater efficiency, and to direct our resources in a way that best serves our primary mission of protecting lives and upholding the law.

- This is vital, because drug dealing and illegal weapons trafficking do not ebb in the midst of an economic crisis.
- Public corruption does not take a holiday.
- Street gangs and other forms of organized crime require no less vigilance.
- All of these threats – and many others -- still must be dealt with, and dealt with effectively.
- The State's laws must be enforced and defended.
- Its precious natural, economic and other assets must be preserved.
- Consumers must be protected.
- Our commitment is to meet all of these challenges -- and many others -- while controlling costs, not compromising quality.
- For the coming fiscal year, the proposed budget allocation for our department represents an overall reduction in spending of \$5 million.
- We have achieved significant savings by streamlining operations and consolidating staff.

- We have consolidated office space and closed some offices altogether.
- We have contracted out services in some cases and, in others, saved money by assigning jobs once handled by outside contractors to state employees.
- I will touch more on cost savings later. But in general, I am pleased to say our department's proposed budget keeps costs down and, at the same time, strengthens us in important ways.
- For example, the budget includes funding for both the training and salaries of the first new State Police recruit class in two years.
- Described by the Governor as a core funding priority, the class is expected to begin this August and provide us with approximately 100 new State Troopers by graduation early next year.
- At the same time, the budget provides funding to hire at least 50 civilian State Police employees to handle administrative and other tasks now being carried out by enlisted members.
- This, in turn, will free up 50 Troopers for assignment to tasks more directly involved with the frontline State Police mission.

- The budget also supports the purchase of 325 new State Police vehicles.
- As you know, our State Police vehicles are often subject to hard use, and replacing them periodically is vital to the safety of both our Troopers and the citizens they serve.
- I've been talking about the State Police and, of course, their work is a highly visible feature of the Department of Law and Public Safety.
- But we are a diverse agency with a multi-faceted mission. And our efforts impact on the quality of life of virtually everyone who lives, works, travels, studies or does business here.
- Each day, we work to improve the quality of life in our state.
- And each day, we make a genuine difference.
- For example, through our Division of Criminal Justice, we secured prison sentences in 2010 against 128 violent street gang defendants and obtained indictments against numerous members and leaders of gang factions.

- The Division also secured multiple indictments charging gun traffickers – including the alleged leader of a network that trafficked firearms to street gangs in New Jersey – as a result of a partnership that included State Police and federal law enforcement.
- We struck a blow for government integrity by securing prison sentences against several public officials -- including a Department of Corrections administrator sentenced to seven years for taking kickbacks on more than \$1 million in contracts -- and by obtaining guilty pleas from 60 other defendants charged with corruption-related crimes.
- Through the efforts of our Division of Law, we obtained more than \$195 million in recoveries and judgments on behalf of the State in 2010 – a 31 percent increase over the prior year.
- Through our Division of Consumer Affairs, we cracked down on unregistered home improvement contractors and moving companies, as well as unscrupulous mortgage foreclosure “rescue” scams and predatory auto towing practices.

- Through our Divisions of Highway Traffic Safety, Alcoholic Beverage Control and State Police, we carried out vigorous driver safety, passenger safety, pedestrian safety and anti-underage-drinking initiatives that, we believe, were influential in making 2010 the safest year in more than six decades in terms of crash-related deaths (556).
- Time does not allow me to highlight all of our policy, prevention and enforcement efforts, but here are some other examples:
- We issued important policy revisions in 2010 for law enforcement regarding both AMBER Alert protocols and stun gun use.
- Our Division on Civil Rights took legal action against those who unlawfully discriminated in the workplace, in housing and elsewhere. At least two of its cases involved public school districts cited for failing to deal effectively with the long-term bullying and harassment of student victims.
- Our Bureau of Securities took action to protect investors by suing unscrupulous principals of securities firms, including the principals of Carr Miller Capital for allegedly using a Ponzi scheme to defraud investors out of more than \$40 million.

- The Division of Gaming Enforcement worked with State Police and the Division of Criminal Justice to identify, investigate and prosecute gaming cheats. Also, the Division's Regulatory Prosecutions Bureau generated \$600,000 in fines, penalties and forfeitures that will help pay for gambling-addiction efforts.
- And our Juvenile Justice Commission continued to save public dollars while upholding public safety through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative or "JDAI," a collaborative effort that reduces the number of young offenders being held – unnecessarily – in secure detention.
- We've also acted swiftly to combat the abuse of anabolic steroids among law enforcement members by forming a Study Group of experts, and their work has already yielded concrete action.
- Just last month we announced new policies -- policies resulting from a collaboration between our Study Group and health insurance administrator Medco -- that will deter the fraudulent purchase of steroids by requiring stronger proofs that the steroids are required to treat a medically-accepted diagnosis.
- In addition, I'm pleased to note that we have selected a vendor for the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program, a data-driven system for identifying physicians who may be improperly prescribing medications.

- In keeping with our commitment to protect some of New Jersey's most vulnerable residents, we've launched efforts to help senior citizens avoid being victimized by fraud schemes -- including the so-called "Grandparent Scam," in which con artists urge their intended victims to send money to aid "relatives" who are supposedly in need.
- We are committed to helping our senior citizens avoid being taken advantage of, and to ensuring that they know where to turn if they've been victimized.
- As I mentioned earlier, we at the Department of Law and Public Safety understand that our state confronts difficult fiscal times, and that efficiency must guide us.
- Earlier I touched on some ways in which our management approach reflects this view.
- I will now share with you more detail.
- Through the purchase of time-keeping software that enables State Police supervisors to better monitor unscheduled overtime, we saved \$2 million in Fiscal Year 2011.
- In another cost-cutting move, we have consolidated Department offices that had been leased in Paterson and Lawrenceville.

- Employees assigned to those two offices have been relocated to other facilities, and total savings realized from the two closures is about \$750,000.
- We have also eliminated the need for construction of a new State Police Security Command Center by designating the existing State Police Wilburtha Station as the Command Center.
- And we are continually looking to consolidate operations and office space to create efficiencies where possible.
- I alluded earlier to reducing costs by privatizing work in some cases, while using state employees instead of private contractors in others.
- At our Hamilton Technology Complex and our Emergency Operations Center, we have assigned certain maintenance and repair tasks once handled by private contractors to state employees.
- This approach is saving us approximately \$2 million per year.
- Meanwhile, we have privatized certain security-related monitoring tasks at the Hughes Justice Complex, saving \$350,000 in the process.
- Likewise, the Juvenile Justice Commission is saving money – a projected half-million dollars in Fiscal 2012 -- by contracting with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) for medical services it once handled in-house.

- The JJC also has saved money by reorganizing its largest secure facilities – the New Jersey Training School for Boys in Monroe and the Juvenile Medium Security Facility in Bordentown – as the result of a decline in average daily population over the last five years.
- I want to assure this Committee that, despite our determination to cut spending where we can, our department has every intention of upholding its usual high standards through effective management of resources.
- It is true that our proposed budget allocation represents a decrease, but it still provides new funding for a number of important needs.
- One of the most vital of these is the hiring of attorneys.
- As I mentioned when I appeared before the Committee in 2010, our Division of Law has approximately 40,000 legal matters pending at any given time – including 15,000 cases that are in litigation.
- Due in large part to a six-year hiring freeze that saw it lose approximately 100 attorneys to attrition, the Division of Law continues to face staffing challenges, but this budget has us moving in the right direction.

- We have analyzed Division of Law staffing levels, have a sense of where we need to be in the future, and I'm pleased to note that our proposed budget includes money to hire 33 additional attorneys.
- We anticipate a reduction in the number of cases going to outside counsel as a result of these new hires.
- The budget also provides for 29 new hires for our Office of Forensic Sciences, including a laboratory director, 24 forensic scientists and four evidence handlers.
- These new employees will be an immense help, as our laboratory's forensic caseload is significant, and we have lost many scientists and support staff to retirement and other opportunities.
- As you may be aware, we have contracted for the purchase of five Agusta helicopters to update our aging fleet.
- One of the helicopters was delivered in March, and another is scheduled to arrive later this week. The third aircraft is due for delivery in June, the fourth in October and the fifth in spring of 2012.
- In closing, we recognize that times are tough not only for our department, but for law enforcement agencies around the state.

- Particularly in these challenging times, I've been a staunch advocate of on-going partnerships, the sharing of law enforcement resources, and such targeted, collaborative efforts as multi-agency task forces -- like the one that enabled us to break up a carjacking ring in Essex County last month.
- Recently, I have also joined in discussions involving Governor Christie, Senate President Sweeney and local leaders about the possible regionalization of police services in some jurisdictions.
- Of course, we are still in the exploration phase.
- But I think regionalization is, of necessity, a concept that we need to take seriously going forward.
- In the mean time, I want to assure you that our Department is working diligently not only to provide direct protection to New Jersey residents, but to help financially-strapped local policing agencies strengthen their own efforts.
- As part of this approach, we are making available federal Byrne Grant dollars to help municipalities that are witnessing significant levels of violent crime acquire new crime-fighting technology.

- The equipment covered by this “technology initiative” grant program includes so-called “eye in the sky” cameras that enable monitoring of the streets, gunshot detection systems, automated license plate readers and the technology needed to transition to county-wide or regional dispatch.
- This kind of equipment can be vital because it serves as a “force multiplier” enabling departments with limited resources to cover more ground.
- The future of law enforcement will rely on technology, regionalization and the use of intelligence-based resources such as the ROIC to combat crime.
- Looking ahead, we remain committed to being a positive resource for local police departments, and to working with them to ensure the safety of New Jersey residents.
- Once again thank you, members of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, for the opportunity to address you here today.
- I will now be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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