

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Thomas W. Corbett, Jr., Esq.
Chairman

James Thomas
Executive Director

May 28, 1999

Honorable Robert D. Robbins
Senate of Pennsylvania
Room 351 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Senator Robbins:

As you know, to date the Administration has chosen not to participate in the Police Corps program, a college scholarship program for students who agree to work on a police force for four years after completing their undergraduate degree. The choice not to participate in this program has been driven by a number of serious deficiencies in the program design and implementation. These issues have limited the number of states that have chosen to participate and are related to the inherent unfairness and inefficiency of the program and its incompatibility with state and local laws, hiring policies and union agreements. Enclosed for your review is a report of our recent assessment of the Police Corps Program.

Given the scope and energies of your House Resolution 167 Task Force, I believe it would be useful for the Task Force to examine the need for educational incentives for police recruits or law enforcement personnel. In viewing the issue broadly, the Task Force would likely agree on the importance of a broad educational base for police officers and the recruitment of educated individuals into the ranks directly serving their communities. With such agreement, the Task Force could consider the Police Corps program and render judgement on the need for its implementation, the development of a similar Pennsylvania-based program, or the development of a supplementary program for Pennsylvania, to best meet the needs of policing in our communities.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Corbett".

Thomas W. Corbett, Jr., Esq.
Chairman

Enclosures

STATUS SUMMARIES – POLICE CORPS PROGRAM IN SELECTED STATES

STATE	PROJECT STATUS	BUDGET	POLICE DEPARTMENTS	TRAINEES
Colorado	Currently in start-up.	\$865,000 projected for training curriculum development and delivery.	None yet participating.	20 participants projected.
Florida	First year, submitted plan in 3/98, funding awarded 11/98 retroactive to 9/98. Administration involves approximately 20 hours weekly on program between 3-4 staff of Florida State University, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice.	Received \$1.6 million for '99. Florida legislature appropriated \$50,000 for '99 budget & \$150,000 for '00 budget to cover recruitment and some administrative costs.	Four departments involved, two sheriff and 2 police.	Initial trainee group to be recruited from 1999 college graduates, 50 applicants at this time. First training class planned for 1/00.
Illinois	Applied 9/97, awarded 10/98, program budget not approved yet, no Federal funds received by either state or students. Still in start-up phase, program design, implementation & recruiting.	No formal budget yet, state POST absorbs start-up admin costs. Web site lists budget of : \$677,500 for 20 trainees and \$340,000 for staffing of program.	No police departments selected or committed. Of the 1,200 departments in state, so far 30 have expressed an interest	None in program yet. Plan projects 20 in '99-00 and 20 to 40 in '00-01.
Missouri	Applied and approved in 1997, first training class in June 1998.	No state fiscal support, program is administered by a college which absorbed first-year administrative and start-up expenses of \$260,000. Annual admin budget now totals \$100,000. '99 training budget of \$348,000 excludes trainee stipend.	11 of the 400 local police departments solicited are now participating.	Of the 17 trainees selected in '98, 14 completed training, participating departments have employed 13. Approximately 25 trainees are projected to enter program annually beginning in '99.

North Carolina	Started in 1996 as pilot participant. Atypical start-up, applied Spring '96, awarded July '96, told to have students in scholarship program by Sept. '96.	Administrator was not willing to discuss program budget.	43 departments participating and matched with trainees. Total of 600 departments in state.	67 trainees in program, another 6 have washed out. Plan projects 20 per year, which will increase to 30 in the future.
Ohio	Started in 1997	Administration budget \$80 to 100 K annually. Projected training budget \$20,000 per trainee.	17 departments interested no matches between participants and departments yet. Total of 1,000 departments in state.	19 trainees in program, all still undergraduates.
Oregon	Started in 1996. Atypical start-up, Portland PD was interested, took over implementation from state, and still runs program.	\$500,000 annual admin budget absorbed by Portland PD. \$1.9 million scholarship & training budget support from Feds.	15 departments participating, including ten local PD's, four sheriffs' departments and the state police. Total of 150 departments in state.	80 scholarship/participant slots total, seven vacant, 24 officers have completed training and are on the street.

What would need to be done to implement the Police Corps within Pennsylvania?

Designation by Governor of a Lead Agency

Procure administrative resources and structure

Personnel

Program Manager

Student Contact Person

Administrative Support

Funding for administrative support and curriculum development / training

Advisory Committee for OJP Plan Development

State Police

Pa Human Relations Commission

MPOETC

Dept. of Community and Economic Development, Center for Local Government Services

Local Chiefs of Police

Create an Advisory Committee (Oversight for entire program)

Subcommittee structure for major tasks

Subcommittee on Training Standards

Police Corps training requirements match-up with existing PA standards, Act 120

Subcommittee on Recruitment

Develop statewide strategy

Gender/race/ethnic heritage sensitive

Subcommittee to Select Participants

Consider varying hiring standards in local police agencies

Civil service testing

Physical standards

Background checks

Mental stability

Establish Process to Place Participant with Police Agency

Determine interested agencies & select specific agencies to participate

Factors for agency participation

Size

Need

Stability of complement

Civil service procedures

Involvement in community policing

Monitoring Student Progress

Student academic grades

Public conduct

Background clearance up dates

Curriculum Development and Training Delivery (RFP / Other process)

REPORT ON THE POLICE CORPS

At present there are 23 states in varying stages of involvement in the Police Corps Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP). The program is intended to address violent crime by increasing the number of police officers with advanced education and training that are assigned to community patrol. Another of the program's objectives is to increase the number of minority police officers serving in the community.

Students accepted into the program receive up to \$7,500 per year, up to \$30,000 total, to cover expenses of their undergraduate education. The students are paired with a sponsoring police department, which must agree to hire and employ them as patrol officers upon completion of their degree and training. The program also provides the cost of a 16 to 24-week training in policing for the participants and allows them a stipend while in the training program. During the required four-year employment as a police officer, the employing department is annually reimbursed \$10,000 per participant officer.

We have identified potential challenges to the implementation of the Police Corps in Pennsylvania particular to problems with the program design and implementation. These challenges will require a close review to determine whether the program, or a similar one, can be made to work in Pennsylvania and, more importantly, meet the needs of police departments in the state.

In order to successfully match students with sponsoring police departments, and assure that the students will be hired by the sponsoring departments, will undoubtedly require changes to: municipal civil service and hiring standards, rules and policies; police union agreements; and, perhaps the statutes governing them. In addition, differences between the statutorily mandated police officer training standards administered by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) and the training mandates of the Police Corps Program must be resolved.

States with a Police Officers' Standards and Training (POST) Commission, administering legislatively established hiring standards that are mandatory for all municipal police departments have been able to more easily implement Police Corps. These states do not have to deal with the myriad of hiring standards and practices that exist in a non-POST state like Pennsylvania. Alternatively, non-POST states have implemented Police Corps by focusing on a small number of police departments that were willing to significantly alter their hiring standards and practices to meet the requirements of the Police Corps Program.

It is important to note that these same problems have been experienced, and have yet to be fully resolved, by a number of the Police Corps participant states. Based on contacts with other states it appears that the initial Police Corps Program design failed to adequately consider the variety

and complexity of existing state laws related to the training and hiring of police officers; the selection processes and standards of municipal governments; and, the interplay between municipal governments and police unions. Although it has been in existence since 1993, the Police Corps Program has yet to adequately address these and other potentially fatal shortcomings.

Problems were also recently identified by the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) in the January 1999 Justice Bulletin. Because student participants and sponsoring departments are affected by fluctuating economic conditions and employment rates “. . . completing the Police Corps Program does not guarantee that the participant will be hired as an officer or complete his or her service.” The Bulletin also identified problems with participants completing the program noting that if injured while attending college, participants may become ineligible to fulfill the duties of a police officer. Further, the requirements of the program do not allow the administration of psychological tests and background clearances until the participant is offered a job which may preclude the hiring of a participant even after he or she has completed the educational and training requirements of the program.

The administration of the Police Corps Program is haunted by two disturbing philosophical shortcomings. The first and most disturbing philosophical shortcoming of the Police Corps is the discriminatory, almost cynical, linking of the program offering scholarships to the children of slain police officers to the Police Corps. While scholarships for the children of slain officers were clearly intended to be available to all, the enabling legislation has excluded from eligibility for scholarships those children residing in the 27 states that do not participate in the Police Corps. Pennsylvania has addressed this problem, to a degree, through Act 1998-129, the Police Officer, Firefighter, Correction Officer, and National Guard Member Child Beneficiary Education Act, which provides educational support at community colleges and state-owned or state-related institutions, for children of those slain in the line of duty.

Secondly, the program ignores the needs of existing police officers. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has published its position that funds supporting the Police Corps would likely be better spent in supporting and furthering the education of those who have already made a commitment to law enforcement as a career. The DOJ maintains a similar scholarship program for police officers, the Law Enforcement Scholarship Program. Unfortunately, the DOJ has not promoted that program as it has the Police Corps, and according to the IACP, has consistently underfunded the Law Enforcement Scholarship Program while simultaneously increasing funding for the Police Corps.

Reasonably looking at the program brings into question the extent of its impact. Typically, participant states report annual new-participant groups of 20 to 40 students. Even without considering dropouts for various causes the addition of 20 to 40 new trainees, when compared to the total police officers trained and put on the street each year, is not significant. Assuming a similar program in Pennsylvania, 20 to 40 new officer would represent only 1.6% to 3.3% of the approximately 1,200 new police officers certified annually by the MPOETC. The Table in Attachment A summarizes the implementation experiences of a sampling of Police Corps participant states. Attachment B outlines the major steps necessary if implementation of the Police Corps in Pennsylvania was to be pursued.