



## KANSAS STATE TROOPERS ASSOCIATION

To: House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee

From: Kansas State Troopers Association  
Bryan Clark, Vice President

Date: January 17, 2023

Re: KSTA View of current law enforcement challenges

Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for taking time today to consider the remarks on the state of law enforcement on behalf of the Kansas State Troopers Association (KSTA). Our organization represents over 500 troopers, motor carrier inspectors, capital police officers and retirees. Our members serve the citizens of Kansas in the traditional role of supporting and keeping Kansans safe on the highways, as well as drug interdiction, DUI enforcement, serving in special operations units like the Special Response Team and the Canine unit of which I am a member, as well as the Aircraft unit which assists with manhunts, active shooters, and search and rescue operations. Our Troop K members (the Capitol Police) are here each day as you enter and exit the statehouse.

When I presented last year, I discussed with you how competitive pay is one factor in the recruitment and retention problems in law enforcement. By way of background, you may recall that the pay for the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) was addressed in 2015 through the hard work of the legislature, the KSTA and the highway patrol administration in place at that time, to establish a Career Progression Plan. The intent was the development of a predictable and consistent solution to keep the KHP pay competitive then and into the future with agencies of similar size. While it made our pay competitive with other agencies of similar size in 2015, other than a 2.5% increase in 2020, it had not been adjusted before last year.

You listened!! and the 2022 Legislature passed an enhancement to the CPP that once again got us into striking distance of other agencies of similar size. On behalf of our membership, I want you to know we are extremely grateful!

The number of new recruits graduating from the KHP academy has diminished in size from 34 and 42 in 2016 and 2017 respectively, taking a precipitous drop in 2020 to 7, and only reaching 7 once in the next five recruit classes. \* The latest graduating class in December 2022 saw 5 recruits complete their training. Couple that with what appears to be an extraordinarily high number of resignations over the last few years, accompanied by high numbers of retirements, and it is creating a public safety and an officer safety concern for our members.

Even with an enhancement to the CPP, the KHP still faces challenges in recruitment and retention today. For our members the most glaring of these is the lowest morale I have seen during my career. Members are leaving for other law enforcement jobs as well as leaving law enforcement all together. Lack of confidence in the current administration and fear of retaliation and reprisal are only further diminishing both recruitment and retention.

To sum up, we are experiencing the same difficulties as our local law enforcement partners with recruitment and retention with the added challenge of no confidence in the current leadership. Fewer troopers mean all the things you imagine, less coverage, slower response time, officer safety concerns, higher accident rates/fatalities and lower morale. The longer it continues, the more it perpetuates these effects.

Thank you again on behalf of all our members for the adjustment to our pay plan last Session and for being so generous with your time today! I would be happy to answer questions.

\*Recruit class graduates KHP Academy

- July 2015 – 20
- July 2016 - 34
- July 2017 – 42
- July 2018 – 21
- June 2019 – 27
- June 2020 – 7
- June 2021 – 5
- January 2022 – 7
- June 2022 – 3
- July 2022 – 5
- December 2022 - 5