

JOSH SHAPIRO
ATTORNEY GENERAL



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June 24, 2021

Mr. Scott Bohn
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association
3905 North Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Executive Director Bohn,

As you are all well aware, tonight local police departments across Pennsylvania will once again be stretched thin due to historic staffing shortages. Men and women will be working overtime to provide basic patrol services because we have fewer sworn officers than just two years ago.

I believe this is not the result of conscious choices by local leaders, but a pure and simple recruitment and staffing crisis that is growing by the day. I have heard about hundreds of vacancies and a decline in applications across the Commonwealth. It is clear we must make the honorable public safety profession an attractive career to more Pennsylvanians.

This staffing crisis may be occurring as demand for public safety resources is increasing. Many reports indicate that emergency calls to 911 have increased. With fewer sworn officers to handle increased work, I know some local chiefs are facing the difficult choice of risking longer emergency response times or eliminating special units, like ones that curb gun violence or investigate child abuse.

Pennsylvania has the resources to stop local communities from having to make these difficult decisions and I have asked the General Assembly to set aside \$28.5 million to help us address this crisis — but we need to understand the scope of the problem and recommend an innovative and immediate response to policy makers. I propose that PCCD launch an emergency task force to immediately study the staffing challenge, and I know that you and your colleagues will have valuable advice and important questions that need to be answered. After study, we should move quickly to implement a handful of programs that could include:

- **A \$6,000 sign-up bonus for new officers** and public safety personnel who join local forces in need.
- **Scholarships up to \$8,500 to cover the cost of Act 120 training.**
- **Matching funds to launch new crisis intervention units.**

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Thank you for your dedication to the safety of all Pennsylvanians and for your efforts to continuously improve our honorable law enforcement profession. Earning the trust and respect of the public is one of the best ways to recruit exceptional officers, and addressing this challenge head-on will allow cities and towns across Pennsylvania to keep our citizens safe.

Reinvigorating our local police forces and public safety services goes hand-in-hand with criminal justice reform efforts that have had bipartisan support in Pennsylvania in recent years. As always, I appreciate our partnership and my office is here to help as we work together to tackle this challenge and provide Pennsylvanians the public safety services they are demanding.

All the best,



JOSH SHAPIRO

CC: Governor Tom Wolf
Les Neri, President of the Pennsylvania State Lodge FOP
Mike Pennington, Executive Director of PCCD
Colonel Robert Evanchick, Pennsylvania State Police Commissioner
Danielle Outlaw, Philadelphia Police Commissioner
Scott Schubert, Pittsburgh Police Commissioner