



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #760

State Patrol Trooper Positions (DOT -- State Patrol)

[LFB 2005-07 Budget Summary: Page 489, #1]

CURRENT LAW

The Department of Transportation's Division of State Patrol is primarily responsible for traffic law enforcement on state highways and the enforcement of commercial motor vehicle and licensing laws. The DOT Secretary is authorized by statute to hire no more than 399 traffic officers plus a person in the classified service designated to head the traffic officers (the State Patrol Colonel). The State Patrol also employs commercial motor vehicle inspectors, although there is no statutory limit on the number of inspectors that DOT may employ. There are currently 111 inspector positions authorized. The SEG base budget for the Division of State Patrol is \$54,703,600.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$1,528,900 SEG and 20.0 SEG positions in 2006-07 to increase the number of State Patrol troopers, raising the number of budget-authorized, sworn trooper positions (troopers and officers of higher rank) to 391.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Although DOT is statutorily authorized to hire 399 traffic officers plus the person in the classified service designated to head them (the State Patrol Colonel), the current number of budget-authorized traffic officers is only 371. The 2003-05 biennial budget (Act 33) eliminated a total of 54 positions in the Department's Division of State Patrol. Of the eliminated positions, 24 were troopers, four were higher-ranking positions in the trooper command structure, and one was the State Patrol Colonel, a position that had been designated as the deputy division administrator. Seven motor carrier inspector positions were also eliminated, reducing the total from 118 to 111.

2. The Governor's bill would increase the number of budget-authorized traffic officer positions to 391, which would still be within the statutory limit of 399. DOA indicates that the Governor included this increase in the bill to maintain the safety on Wisconsin highways, citing a general increasing trend over the last several years in the number of traffic fatalities.

3. Prior to the reduction in the 2003-05 budget to lower the number of troopers to 371, the last time the number of trooper positions was changed was the 1999-01 budget, when the number was increased from 385 to 399. Prior to that time, the number was increased from 300 to 375 in 1968 and from 375 to 385 in the 1983-85 biennium. The current number of troopers authorized, therefore, is lower than the number authorized in 1968.

4. The funding provided by the bill includes salary and fringe benefits for the 20 positions for one full year (\$1,120,900), supplies funding, including fleet costs, per diem, and clothing (\$240,000), and one-time funding for training and related hiring costs (\$168,000).

5. The Department indicates that the recruitment of new troopers would begin in 2005-06, while their 23-week training course at the State Patrol Training Academy would likely begin at the beginning of 2006-07. The new troopers would complete their training late in 2006.

6. The State Patrol's policy is to deploy troopers to cover state highways based upon traffic volumes and generally provide patrols on interstate highways on a 24-hour basis (except those in Milwaukee County, which are patrolled by Milwaukee County Sheriff's deputies). Prior to the Act 33 reductions, there were two counties (Florence and Menominee) to which there were no troopers specifically assigned (other than Milwaukee County), and five counties (Adams, Burnett, Iron, Pepin, and Taylor) for which there was only one trooper assigned.

7. The trooper reductions resulting from Act 33 have been accomplished entirely by eliminating positions that became vacant as the result of retirements or for other reasons. The Department indicates that, of the 24 trooper positions eliminated, 12 were taken from counties with interstates and 12 were taken from counties without interstates. If the 20 additional trooper positions are provided, DOT says that an attempt will be made to restore, as much as possible, the distribution pattern of troopers that existed prior to the Act 33 reductions.

8. If the additional positions are not provided, the Department indicates that over time a realignment of trooper coverage may be made. The State Patrol uses data on accidents and traffic growth in determining where to place troopers.

9. Although the Department of Transportation's budget request included several fee increases, including a \$15 increase in the auto registration fee, and funding increases to both state highway programs and several local programs, the Department did not request an increase in the number of budget-authorized state troopers.

10. The bill contains funding increases for several DOT programs, including state highway programs and local transportation aid and assistance programs. These funding increases are made possible, in part, by increases to vehicle registration and title fees and through the use of long-term bonding for the Marquette Interchange reconstruction project. If the Committee decides

that the fee increases should be reduced or eliminated or that the use of bonding should be curtailed, then it may be necessary to reduce the funding increases for transportation programs, including some or all of the increase provided to add troopers.

11. Despite the funding provided for additional troopers in 2006-07, as well as other, smaller funding increases for fleet inflation and for the replacement of portable radio equipment, the total funding for the State Patrol's SEG appropriation (including the amount transferred to a new appropriation for the Bureau of Transportation Safety) is still \$610,400 less than the appropriation base. This is largely because of significant reductions to the SEG appropriation under standard budget adjustments and under the Department's reorganization and budget reduction plan. Since the Division would lose 20.0 positions (all non-sworn) under the Department reorganization and budget reduction initiative in the bill, the additional trooper positions would not add to the total number of positions in the Division, relative to the base year.

12. If the Committee makes the decision to increase the number of budget-authorized troopers, but determines that it is necessary to achieve savings on this item, relative to the Governor's recommendation, a lesser number of positions could be authorized. An additional ten troopers, for instance, would require an increase to the base of \$764,500, for a savings relative to the bill of \$764,400.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation to provide \$1,528,900 SEG and 20.0 SEG positions in 2006-07 to increase the number of State Patrol troopers, raising the number of sworn trooper positions (troopers and officers of higher rank) to 391.

2. Delete \$764,400 SEG and 10.0 SEG positions in 2006-07 to increase the number of State Patrol troopers to 381, rather than 391.

<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>SEG</u>
2005-07 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$764,400
2006-07 POSITIONS (Change to Bill)	- 10.00

3. Delete provision.

<u>Alternative 3</u>	<u>SEG</u>
2005-07 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$1,528,900
2006-07 POSITIONS (Change to Bill)	- 20.00

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