



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Contact: ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov

Governor Josh Shapiro Shares Plans to Recruit More Municipal Police Officers at Mercyhurst Municipal Police Academy in Erie

Gov. Shapiro's commonsense budget will help address Pennsylvania's municipal police officer shortage and make our communities safer.



Erie, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** met with cadets at the Mercyhurst Municipal Police Academy in Erie, where he heard about the challenges they're facing and discussed his commonsense budget proposal that invests in public safety and takes steps to recruit more police officers to fill critical staffing shortages.

"My Administration is committed to creating safer communities for Pennsylvanians – and that starts with ensuring that our police departments are well-staffed, well-funded, and well-trained," **said Governor Josh Shapiro**. "Our police officer shortage is a critical issue across the Commonwealth, and we must act to support the men and women working each day to keep us

safe. Policing is a noble profession and good people want to do it. To those who choose to pursue a career of public service, whether in law enforcement, teaching, or nursing – we will have your back, and we'll start by putting up to \$2,500 back in your pockets."

"It's always an important day when the Governor comes to Northwest Pennsylvania. It's a better day when the Governor brings help and I hear that's what he's here to do today," **said City of Erie Police Chief Dan Spizarny**. "As the Attorney General, we've seen Governor Shapiro here in Erie addressing the opioid crisis, gun violence, trauma informed care, and many other topics. We're happy to see he's back as Governor helping with an important issue."

"Our class of cadets come from many walks of life of varying ages and different stages of their careers, but we all have one common goal – and that is to serve the communities that we love and treasure," **said Mercyhurst Police Academy Cadet Jose Montes**. "We are very fortunate to have like-minded people also serving in the government like Governor Shapiro and his staff. We're thankful that Governor Shapiro is innovative and taking actionable steps to put us in a better position to serve and protect, like introducing a tax credit for new officers in Pennsylvania."

Pennsylvania has the second most state and local law enforcement agencies in the nation with nearly 1,000 agencies, but the Commonwealth is currently facing a critical shortage of more than 1,200 municipal police officers. Compared to the 1990s, Pennsylvania State Police is seeing fewer applicants, down from nearly 10,000 per class 30 years ago to just 1,000 applicants per class today. At the same time, roughly 1 in 5 9-1-1 dispatch positions are also vacant – and in northwestern Pennsylvania, that rises to more than 1 in 4.

Governor Shapiro is committed to solving this critical workforce shortage and his budget proposes \$24.7 million in job recruitment and retention incentives to attract more people to train to become police officers, teachers, and nurses through a proposed refundable tax credit of up to \$2,500 a year for three years.

Governor Shapiro's budget proposal also invests in several other public safety initiatives, including:

- \$16.4 million for four new Pennsylvania state trooper cadet classes in 2023-24, which would hire and train 384 new troopers, helping to fill staffing gaps and provide more coverage across the Commonwealth.
- The creation of a Public Safety and Protection Fund, reducing the Pennsylvania State Police's reliance on the Motor License Fund, and freeing up an estimated \$1.5 billion for road and bridge projects while ensuring law enforcement have the resources they need to keep our communities safe.
- \$105 million to address community violence throughout the Commonwealth through the successful Violence Intervention and Prevention program housed in the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.
- Creating stable funding for 911 dispatch services, including an initial investment of over \$50 million.
- Increasing funding for firefighters and EMS providers by \$36 million to purchase new equipment, expand training, and provide additional resources.

Learn more about Governor Shapiro's comprehensive approach to building safer communities here: <http://shapirobudget.pa.gov>.

###