



The Florida Senate

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Committee on Transportation

Senator Jim Sebesta, Chairman

REVIEW OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FUNCTIONS WITHIN SELECTED STATE AGENCIES

SUMMARY

During the early 1990's, increasing community demands, rising crime rates, and shifting law enforcement priorities directed state and local resources away from traffic enforcement to other crime-fighting activities. During this same time period, Florida's motoring environment experienced incremental, but notable increases in the number of traffic-related crashes, injuries, and deaths.

Recent trends in state traffic enforcement indicators reveal decreases in some key enforcement activities. For example, during the past decade the number of total arrests, DUI arrests, and time spent on preventive patrol declined. Additionally, state traffic enforcement agencies continue to address the challenges associated with the growth in the number of vehicles on the road, resource limitations, evolving enforcement priorities, and institutional changes.

Safety and law enforcement officials agree that state traffic enforcement efforts should be increased, but not at the expense of other important public safety concerns. There are a number of strategies available to address this goal. Many of these strategies focus on operational changes designed to increase the number of officers patrolling the state's roadways. Similarly, there are a number of policy options relating to organizational changes that could enhance the overall effectiveness of state resources.

BACKGROUND

During calendar year 2000, 2,999 people died and 231,588 people were injured in Florida traffic crashes. The corresponding economic impact of these deaths alone totaled more than \$2.4 billion. The importance of traffic enforcement is also reflected in public opinion surveys that indicate aggressive driving, driving under the influence, and speed-related violations are

significant public safety concerns. Proponents of traffic enforcement assert that an effective traffic enforcement program is critical to the ability of law enforcement agencies to detect and solve crimes, apprehend criminals, prevent crashes, and, ultimately, save lives.

Traffic laws in Florida are enforced by more than 400 state, county, municipal, and special jurisdiction law enforcement agencies. During 1999, these law enforcement agencies issued 3.9 million uniform traffic citations to Florida motorists. This total includes all categories of criminal, moving, and non-moving traffic violations. The majority of uniform traffic citations were issued through municipal police agencies (1.8 million) and county sheriff offices (1.3 million). State law enforcement agencies accounted for almost 800,000 traffic citations. During 2000, 527,600 traffic crash reports (long- and short-form reports) were submitted by various law enforcement agencies to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

State Traffic Enforcement Agencies

While a dozen state law enforcement agencies employ sworn officers and are authorized to enforce at least some Florida traffic laws, a relatively small number of state agencies conduct traffic enforcement as a significant component of their public safety mission. The Florida Highway Patrol (Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles) is the largest traffic law enforcement agency and performs a wide range of enforcement and safety functions. The Motor Carrier Compliance Office (Department of Transportation) is responsible for ensuring the safe operation of commercial trucks and buses in Florida. University police departments and the Capitol Police (Department of Management Services) are responsible for traffic and parking enforcement activities within their jurisdictional boundaries. As Exhibit 1 indicates, the Florida Highway Patrol accounted for the vast majority

of traffic citations and traffic crash reports generated through state law enforcement agencies. Each of these agencies is discussed in greater detail below.

**EXHIBIT 1
Year 2000 Traffic Citations and Crash Reports**

Agency	Traffic Citations	Crash Reports
Florida Highway Patrol	752,252	88,662
Motor Carrier Compliance	12,306	0
University Police		
FAMU	910	119
FAU	517	168
FGCU	110	0
FIU	1,033	159
FSU	2,218	206
UCF	2,616	148
UF	4,216	297
UNF	329	136
USF	1,763	309
UWF	627	37
Capitol Police	75	75

Source: Analysis of information provided by individual agencies

Florida Highway Patrol - Through its law enforcement and public education activities, the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) works to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on Florida's roadways. State troopers patrol the highways, investigate traffic crashes, make arrests, assist other law enforcement officers, and provide safety education and training. The Patrol is organized into nine field troops which are distributed throughout the state, with a tenth troop designated for turnpike operations. The troops are further subdivided into 30 district headquarters. The Patrol is organized into the following six operational units:

- Traffic Enforcement enforces traffic laws and apprehends drivers who violate laws by engaging in illegal activities while on the highway.
- Traffic Homicide Investigations conducts investigations of fatal car crashes to determine if a felony has occurred.
- Safety Education promotes driver safety and education through safety presentations, media contacts, and news releases.
- The FHP Academy provides law enforcement training to FHP recruits and in-service training to members of the Patrol.

- Investigations conducts criminal investigations targeting auto theft rings, driver license fraud, and odometer and title fraud cases.
- Administration provides support to the director in the oversight of the various activities relating to accreditation, inspections, and special operations.

While FHP is authorized to enforce traffic laws on all public roads in Florida, the Patrol's enforcement activities are focused on the 12,000 miles of roads within the State Highway System (interstates, turnpikes, toll roads, and other state roads). In addition, FHP is responsible for traffic enforcement on portions of the state's 69,000 miles of county roads. The Patrol and individual county sheriffs have entered into agreements allocating the workload on county roads. During fiscal year 2000-2001, the patrol was appropriated \$147,402,942 and 2,184 positions (sworn and non-sworn).

Motor Carrier Compliance Office – This office enforces state and federal laws and rules regulating the weight and size of vehicles operating on the state's highways, and the safety of commercial motor vehicles and their drivers. The primary goals of the Motor Carrier Compliance Office (MCCO) are to protect highway system pavement and structures from excessive damage due to overweight and oversize vehicles and to reduce the number and severity of crashes involving commercial vehicles. MCCO is composed of a central office in Tallahassee and 10 field enforcement offices distributed throughout the state.

MCCO uses both sworn law enforcement officers and non-sworn weight inspectors to enforce vehicle weight, size, fuel tax, and registration requirements. Weight inspectors weigh trucks and check registration and fuel tax compliance at 21 fixed scale locations along major highways. As part of their patrol duties on state highways, MCCO law enforcement officers perform commercial motor vehicle safety inspections and traffic enforcement. Officers also determine whether commercial drivers are appropriately licensed, have maintained required logbooks of their hours of service, and are operating their vehicles in a safe manner. MCCO officers are authorized to visit truck and bus terminals to examine company vehicles and maintenance records, personnel records, and safety procedures. In recent years, MCCO has also increased its drug interdiction activities. During fiscal year 2000-2001, MCCO was appropriated \$22,518,074 and 430 positions (sworn and non-sworn).

University Police Departments – Each of Florida’s 11 state universities maintain their own police department. Section 240.268, F.S., provides that university police officers are law enforcement officers of the state with the right to arrest any person for violation of state law or applicable county or city ordinances when such violations occur on any property or facilities which are under the guidance, supervision, regulation, or control of the State University System. In addition, university police officers are authorized to make arrests off campus when pursuit originates on campus.

University police typically provide a range of law enforcement services, including criminal investigations, monitoring the security of university property, crowd control during special events, and traffic enforcement. University police focus their traffic enforcement efforts on hazardous moving violations such as speeding, red light running, and careless driving. The size and resources of university police departments vary widely, from 86 sworn positions at the University of Florida, to 10 sworn positions at Gulf Coast University. Statewide, the various state university police departments employ 418 sworn positions, and 157 non-sworn positions.

Florida Capitol Police – The Capitol Police provide law enforcement services, security, and fire safety for facilities owned or managed by the Department of Management Services. Specifically, Capitol Police officers are responsible for overseeing the security of state buildings and parking lots, investigating criminal incidents occurring on state properties, and enforcing regulations in state parking lots and garages. Currently, Capitol Police officers are responsible for public safety in the Capitol Complex, 137 additional buildings and complexes in Tallahassee, and 17 facilities in 15 other Florida cities. During fiscal year 2000-2001, the Capitol Police were appropriated \$4,283,900 and 134 positions. This total includes 63 sworn law enforcement officer positions and 71 non-sworn security officers.

METHODOLOGY

This report examines the operational responsibilities and organizational placement of state traffic law enforcement agencies. Senate staff interviewed key stakeholders, including representatives of the Florida Highway Patrol, the Motor Carrier Compliance Office, university police departments, Capitol Police, and other state law enforcement agencies. In addition, staff interviewed and surveyed Florida sheriffs, and

representatives of the Florida Chiefs of Police Association. Staff also obtained input from other state safety and law enforcement organizations. Finally, staff conducted an extensive literature review, including previous legislation impacting state traffic enforcement agencies.

FINDINGS

While Florida has made significant strides during the past two decades in improving highway safety, recent safety and enforcement trends indicate the need for improvement. The consensus is that state traffic enforcement efforts should be increased, but not at the expense of other important public safety concerns. This report examines a number of operational strategies to increase the availability and effectiveness of state traffic enforcement resources. Similarly, the report evaluates various options for reorganizing state traffic enforcement agencies, including shifting more responsibilities and resources to local law enforcement agencies. Most of these options directly impact FHP, the state’s largest traffic enforcement agency.

Recent Trends in Traffic Safety and Enforcement

During the 1980’s, many indicators of traffic safety in Florida reflected significant improvements. For example, the Florida mileage death rate declined from 4.1 in 1981 to 2.2 in 1991.¹ Similarly, the number of actual traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths generally declined during this same time period. However, more recent safety and enforcement trends suggest some cause for concern. For example, the state’s mileage death rate has remained virtually unchanged at 2.1, well above the national average of 1.6, for almost a decade. Similarly, some indicators of FHP’s enforcement activities, such as traffic citations, preventive patrol, and DUI arrests, declined during the 1990’s.

National Enforcement Trends – During the 1990’s most state and local law enforcement agencies reported a decline in traffic enforcement activities. A 2001 study of traffic enforcement activities commissioned by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) identified an overall declining trend in the number of citations issued for all categories of traffic violations. This report found that demands on budgets and personnel limited resources available for traffic enforcement. Most jurisdictions reported that traffic enforcement resources have not kept pace with the growth in the number of drivers. This study also noted

¹ The mileage death rate is calculated based on the number of deaths per 100 million vehicle miles of travel

that of the three categories of law enforcement agencies profiled (state, county, city), only county sheriff departments generally reported increases in traffic law enforcement activities.

Florida Safety and Enforcement Trends – Throughout the 1980’s and early 1990’s, traffic crash statistics reflected significant improvements in Florida’s motoring environment. Data provided by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (Exhibit 2) indicates traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths declined or remained static during this time period, despite a steady increase in the number of miles driven. These improvements in traffic safety are reflected in the fact that the Florida mileage death rate (MDR) declined from 4.1 in 1981 to 2.2 in 1991. Traffic safety authorities generally credit this improvement to a number of factors: safer vehicles and roads, stronger laws, better public information and education, as well as law enforcement efforts.

EXHIBIT 2

1990-2000 Florida Motoring Environment

Year	Crashes	Injuries	Deaths	MDR
1990	216,245	214,208	2,951	2.7
1991	195,312	195,122	2,523	2.2
1992	196,176	205,432	2,480	2.2
1993	199,039	212,497	2,719	2.3
1994	206,183	223,458	2,722	2.3
1995	228,589	233,900	2,847	2.2
1996	241,377	243,320	2,806	2.2
1997	240,639	240,001	2,811	2.1
1998	245,440	241,863	2,889	2.1
1999	243,409	232,225	2,920	2.1
2000	246,541	231,588	2,999	2.1

Source: DHSMV 1990-2000 Traffic Crash Facts

By 1993, the number of crashes, injuries, and deaths on Florida’s roadways began to increase, albeit incrementally. Due to the increasing number of miles driven, the Florida mileage death rate has remained relatively stable in recent years at 2.1. However, this figure remains significantly higher than the national mileage death rate of 1.6. Currently, Florida has the ninth highest mileage death rate in the nation. Florida ranks second in the nation in pedestrian/bicyclists deaths, and third nationally in fatal crashes involving commercial motor vehicles. In 2000, 32.6 percent of traffic fatalities and 9.6 percent of traffic crashes were alcohol-related, up slightly from 1999. The seat-belt usage rate increased from 58.7 percent in 1999, to 64.8 percent in 2000. Almost 60 percent of traffic-related deaths, and 55 percent of traffic-related injuries occurred on the state highway system.

Statewide traffic enforcement statistics indicate the number of traffic citations issued declined during the early 1990’s, before rebounding in the middle of the decade. As Exhibit 3 indicates, both state and local law enforcement agencies reported a decline in traffic citations. This decline was attributable to a number of factors. Public concerns relating to violent criminal activity prompted many law enforcement agencies to revise their enforcement priorities. The elimination of the federally-mandated 55 mph speed limit and reductions in traffic safety grants may have also contributed to this decline. In the case of FHP, the decline may have also been impacted by 1992 legislation banning the use of citation quotas for purposes of evaluating the performance of state law enforcement officers.

EXHIBIT 3

1990-1999 Florida Traffic Citations

Year	FHP	Police	Sheriffs
1990	955,450	1,693,966	1,064,243
1991	1,025,166	1,601,557	1,015,030
1992	949,645	1,459,045	929,763
1993	820,084	1,380,343	878,683
1994	725,712	1,441,424	889,936
1995	702,321	1,564,608	946,818
1996	734,936	1,622,501	986,982
1997	717,918	1,648,604	1,030,456
1998	775,569	1,696,185	1,122,301
1999	752,252	1,834,851	1,285,284

Source: DHSMV 1990-1999 Uniform Traffic Citation Statistics

FHP Enforcement Activities – An analysis of FHP’s enforcement activities during the past decade reveals some cause for concern. As shown in Exhibit 4, the number of total arrests decreased by 11 percent, and the number of misdemeanor arrests decreased by 48 percent. The number of DUI arrests decreased by 38 percent. This decrease is substantially higher than the 22 percent decline in statewide DUI arrests. Similarly, the percentage of time troopers spent on preventive patrol declined from 39 percent in 1990, to 31 percent in 2000. Based on FHP data, the average response time for requests for assistance increased from 20.6 minutes in 1994, to 28.4 minutes in 2001.

The Patrol maintains many of these figures reflect a shift within FHP from enforcement to a service-oriented philosophy. Commanders cite the increase in the number of crashes handled and motorists assisted as evidence of FHP’s commitment to addressing frequently identified citizen concerns. Increases in drug and seatbelt enforcement efforts also reflect shifts in

safety considerations and enforcement priorities. In some cases, concentrated enforcement and education efforts may have reduced the incidence of certain violations. Finally, the reduction in some FHP traffic enforcement activities is not inconsistent with the recent experience of most law enforcement agencies.

EXHIBIT 4
Florida Highway Patrol
Trooper Activities 1989/1990 – 1999/2000

Activity	1989/1990	1999/2000	Change
Total Arrests	914,931	812,352	-11%
Infractions	794,764	747,280	-6%
Misdemeanors	115,128	59,638	-48%
Felonies	5,039	5,434	8%
Arrests Included:			
Drugs	1,817	3,213	77%
DUI	19,074	11,863	-38%
Faulty Equipment	21,824	19,816	-19%
Child Restraint	8,981	3,527	-61%
Seat Belt	46,008	89,605	95%
Crashes Investigated (all categories)			
Assistance Rendered	189,899	209,549	10%
Miles Patrolled (in millions)	241,212	319,256	32%
	33.4	37.1	11%

Source: FHP 1990-2000 Trooper Activity Reports

Issues Confronting Traffic Enforcement Agencies - In 1997, NHTSA sponsored a seminar themed, “Police Traffic Services in the 21st Century”, that examined critical issues relating to the future of traffic enforcement. Seminar participants identified three issues of major concern: (1) elected officials and administrators underestimate traffic enforcement’s potential impact on overall crime reduction; (2) the widespread perception of traffic enforcement as largely a revenue generator; and (3) the public’s lack of compliance with traffic laws. The seminar also identified several critical issues that will affect traffic enforcement services in the future:

- *The demand for further diversion of police personnel from traffic enforcement to other crime-fighting activities will require reevaluation of how and why services are provided to the public.*
- *Static levels of law enforcement personnel and funding will require administrators to examine the level and method of service delivery, innovative management techniques, and consolidation/ privatization of services.*

Florida agencies have long maintained that they lack adequate staffing resources. While there is some uncertainty with regard to actual staffing needs, there is little question that the number of state officers has not kept pace with growth in Florida’s motoring environment. For example, during the 1990’s the number of licensed Florida drivers increased by 21 percent, and vehicle miles of travel increased by 30 percent. During this same time period, the number of sworn positions within FHP increased by 7 percent. Between 1992 and 2000, commercial vehicle registrations in Florida alone increased by 80 percent, and the number of trucks weighed in Florida increased by 238 percent, while MCCO staffing increased by 62 percent.

In addition to resource constraints, a number of parties have voiced concerns relating to the operational effectiveness of Florida traffic enforcement agencies. Some of these concerns are reflected in performance indicators, such as those contained in Exhibit 4. Additionally, FHP’s evolving enforcement priorities have raised questions among local law enforcement officials regarding FHP’s commitment to its core mission of traffic enforcement. Similarly, continuing institutional change within FHP, combined with several highly publicized incidents involving trooper misconduct, have generated concerns relating to management, morale, and discipline within FHP.

Operational Considerations Relating to Florida Traffic Law Enforcement Agencies

There are a number of operational strategies that could be implemented to improve state traffic enforcement services. Most of these strategies are predicated on the finding that FHP needs to reassess both its mission and resources, and refocus its efforts on traffic enforcement activities on state roads.

Refocus on FHP’s Core Mission – Although it is commonly believed that on-the-road patrol time (unobligated patrol), is the primary function of the Patrol, on average troopers spend almost 70 percent of their time engaged in either obligated patrol duties (crash investigations, report writing, assisting motorists) or non-patrol activities (training, administrative functions). Unobligated patrol time represents time available for self-initiated, proactive enforcement of traffic and criminal laws. The importance of preventive patrol is supported by traffic studies that have documented the linkage between a visible law enforcement presence and compliance with traffic laws.

State and local law enforcement officials endorsed the proposition that FHP needs to concentrate more of its resources on patrolling state highways. However, accomplishing this goal may prove challenging. For example, many of the factors impacting FHP workload are not directly or indirectly controllable by FHP. Similarly, competing demands for limited FHP resources will require difficult decisions regarding enforcement priorities. Nevertheless, there are a number of strategies available to address this goal.

- *The number of supervisory FHP personnel should be reduced and the associated positions reassigned to traffic enforcement duty.*
- *The practice of maintaining significant vacancies within FHP should be discontinued and all authorized positions should be filled as soon as practical.*
- *Traffic enforcement resources should be strategically deployed based on reliable crash and activity statistics.*
- *Overtime funding, a cost-efficient means to increase traffic enforcement without hiring additional sworn positions, should be increased.*
- *Technology applications should focus on reducing the time spent on traffic stops and crash reports, and support more effective management of enforcement resources.*
- *Use of non-sworn community service officers to process certain crash reports has proven cost-effective and should be expanded.*
- *State officer evaluation criteria should be revised to include appropriate measures of productivity.*

Clarify FHP's Responsibilities – Florida law does not clearly assign FHP or county sheriffs primary responsibility for investigating traffic crashes on local roads outside city limits. Responsibility for crash investigations is currently determined by informal agreements between individual county sheriffs and FHP. In general, sheriffs in less populated counties are most reliant on FHP assistance on county roads. A 1998 study conducted by the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability determined that FHP investigated 40

percent of the crashes occurring on local roads outside city limits.

One strategy for increasing the availability of FHP resources is to limit FHP's crash investigation responsibilities to state roads. Sheriffs would be designated responsibility for patrolling and responding to crashes on county roads. Any law enforcement officer near the scene could still respond to care for injured persons and divert traffic, but the law enforcement agency with primary responsibility would conduct the actual investigation, if reasonably available. This strategy would make various agencies (FHP, county sheriffs, city police) more accountable for performance by better defining their jurisdictional responsibilities.

Implementation of this strategy would effectively shift more traffic crash investigations from FHP to county sheriffs. County sheriffs have historically opposed this measure, citing their limited resources and FHP's expertise in investigating certain types of crashes. However, most of the sheriffs contacted in connection with this report believe FHP's response times for crashes on both state and local roads have increased to unacceptable levels. A number of sheriffs said that they would be willing to assume greater responsibility for handling crash investigations on county roads provided that additional FHP resources were placed on state roads and procedures remained in place for FHP to assist sheriffs with certain types of crashes.

Empower Other State Agencies – As previously noted, a dozen state law enforcement agencies are authorized to enforce Florida traffic laws. In most cases, these agencies already possess the necessary resources (sworn officers, marked vehicles, radar equipment, etc.) to conduct traffic enforcement activities. However, many agencies are not taking full advantage of these resources to enforce traffic laws. Encouraging all state law enforcement agencies to increase their traffic enforcement efforts would provide additional enforcement resources, enhancing the safety of Florida's roadways. Similarly, enhancements in the coordination of training, communication, and equipment among all state law enforcement agencies could improve overall service delivery.

Efforts to increase the traffic enforcement activities of certain state agencies should be undertaken in a very responsible and deliberate manner. It must be recognized that each state law enforcement agency has its own unique and important mission. Expanded traffic enforcement activities should be considered only

in instances where it is feasible and not disruptive to the agency's core mission. In addition, it is critical to ensure that Florida traffic laws are enforced in a consistent and uniform manner, regardless of the agency.

Reorganization of State Law Enforcement Agencies

During the past decade the Cabinet, Governor's Office, and Legislature have considered various proposals to reorganize the state's law enforcement agencies. For example, in 1992 the Legislature considered Cabinet-approved legislation which would have merged FHP and the Capitol Police into the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Similarly, the merger of FHP and MCCO has been discussed at various intervals. While none of these proposals have been implemented, they highlight a number of organizational considerations that warrant review.

Department of Public Safety Model – Florida could follow the example of other states by consolidating many of its current law enforcement agencies into a single department. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, almost one-half of the states have adopted some variation on this concept. For example, the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety houses the Highway Patrol, National Guard, and Emergency Management offices. Proponents of such consolidated departments maintain that they improve public safety effectiveness by coordinating all of the state's public safety resources through one agency. Supporters also maintain that such agencies provide enhanced efficiencies in training, administration, facilities, equipment, and communications.

Past proposals to consolidate law enforcement agencies in Florida have met considerable opposition. Specifically, opponents of such mergers argue that each of Florida's law enforcement units has a unique mission and enforcement responsibility. In order to successfully perform their mission, these law enforcement units require close support and coordination with their parent agency. Citing their longstanding concerns with the creation of a state police agency, county sheriffs have also opposed the expansion/consolidation of certain state law enforcement units.

Consolidation of FHP and MCCO – Prior to 1980, the motor carrier enforcement function in Florida was divided between FHP and Public Service Commission. As previously detailed in this report, FHP and MCCO

currently have similar responsibilities, organizational cultures, and service areas. Most states assign commercial motor vehicle regulatory responsibilities to the state police or highway patrol. Consolidation of these two entities could potentially provide a number of long-range benefits. Administrative costs could be reduced through the elimination of duplicative support staff and resource sharing. Consolidation could also reduce the costs associated with vehicle and equipment procurement and the operation of separate field offices.

While the case for consolidating FHP and MCCO is compelling, there are additional factors that should be considered. First, MCCO's mission is intrinsically linked to that of the Department of Transportation. The Department is responsible for maintaining roads and would be most adversely impacted by inadequate weight enforcement. There is the possibility that consolidation of these two units would dilute the state's commercial motor vehicle weight and safety enforcement capabilities. This could jeopardize Florida's receipt of federal transportation funds. It must also be acknowledged that MCCO personnel have specialized training, expertise, and enforcement authority that would not be easily transferable. Finally, both MCCO and FHP maintain that the actual costs associated with a merger would result in substantial additional costs to house, equip, and train a unified component within the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Decentralization of State Traffic Law Enforcement

Another option for restructuring traffic enforcement in Florida is to decentralize state traffic enforcement responsibilities and resources to local law enforcement agencies. This could be accomplished through the use of state grants to municipal and county law enforcement agencies. These grants would be dedicated exclusively for traffic enforcement services on state roads and include specific performance criteria. Under this scenario the state would continue to retain a scaled down traffic enforcement function to provide coordination with local law enforcement agencies and continued public information and education programs.

While the grant program described above would be a departure from the current service delivery method, it would not be totally unprecedented. For example, the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Elder Affairs utilize a decentralized service delivery strategy. Similarly, in many areas of the state local law enforcement agencies currently patrol state roads. A

number of local law enforcement officials expressed support for this option and suggested their agencies could provide equivalent or better traffic enforcement services at reduced costs, through the elimination of administrative overhead. According to sheriffs and police chiefs, grant funds would be used to expand existing traffic enforcement units, or start new units. However, local law enforcement officials emphasized that in order for this proposal to be successfully implemented state grants must be significant and recurring.

Decentralization of traffic enforcement could result in the loss of expertise and consistency in the enforcement of Florida traffic laws. This is due to the fact that all troopers receive advanced training in crash and traffic homicide investigation, traffic law, and other subjects that local law enforcement officers generally do not. Additionally, FHP currently responds to state emergencies and events that require supplemental law enforcement assistance. In the absence of FHP, the state might require greater involvement on the part of other state and local agencies in cases of emergencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Operational Strategies – There are a number of operational strategies that should be implemented to improve state traffic enforcement, including:

- Reduce the number of supervisory personnel and reassign positions to traffic enforcement;
- Prioritize officer activities to place more emphasis on preventive patrol;
- Utilize technology to minimize the amount of time spent on crash reports and traffic stops;
- Revise state officer evaluation criteria to incorporate appropriate measures of productivity;

- Clarify the Florida Highway Patrol's responsibilities by limiting crash investigation duties to state roads; and
- Where appropriate, encourage other state law enforcement agencies to become more proactive in traffic enforcement.

Reorganize State Traffic Enforcement Resources – The Legislature should evaluate the potential benefits associated with reorganization of state traffic law enforcement agencies. One possible option is to create a unified public safety agency through the consolidation of various state law enforcement and safety entities. In addition to the agencies discussed in this report, this proposal might include entities such as the State Fire Marshall, the Division of Emergency Management, and the Florida National Guard. A more narrow consolidation option is to merge the Florida Highway Patrol and Motor Carrier Compliance Office into a single state traffic enforcement agency.

Decentralize State Traffic Enforcement Resources – The Legislature should also evaluate the feasibility of assigning primary responsibility for traffic enforcement on state roads to local law enforcement agencies. This could be accomplished through the use of recurring state grants to local sheriff and police agencies. Performance criteria could be incorporated into traffic enforcement grants to ensure that state funds are used for the intended purposes. Under this scenario, state resources currently allocated to FHP would be redirected to local agencies. The state would continue to retain a scaled down traffic safety function to provide coordination with local law enforcement agencies and continued public information and education programs.