



MISSISSIPPI STATE TROOPERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 24, 2014

Honorable Tate Reeves, Lt. Governor of Mississippi
Members of the Mississippi Senate

Dear Sir or Madam,

The following letter was written by a proud Mississippi State Trooper several weeks ago. Like many of us, he felt the need to express his thoughts in a letter to those who are in direct control of the future of the Department of Public Safety and the Mississippi Highway Patrol. Soon after other Troopers read the letter, we realized that it speaks the sentiment and feelings of most Mississippi State Troopers, as proven by the signatures attached.

The letter in no way reflects our support, or lack of support, for any person, position of office, political figure, appointee, or political association. We very much respect our Chain of Command as Mississippi State Troopers, and we recognize all elected officials in this state as a valuable and integral part of our state government.

We respectfully present this letter in an effort to communicate to you our plea for help. Behind every State Trooper is a family who wonders if we will come home after a shift, and sees us put our lives on the line every day to protect the dignity and the peace of the State of Mississippi. We are so much more than the badge, or the car, or the shoulder patch, or even our Administration. We are men and women. We are professionals. We are the best of the best. We are not perfect, but we strive for excellence. Most importantly, we are all deeply dedicated to our duties of Courtesy, Service, and Safety.

Our success in providing the best possible protection and service to the citizens of our state lies in your hands. Please help us provide you and your families, as well as every other man, woman, and child, with the service they deserve.

Respectfully,

Jimmie Dale Thomas
President

January 24, 2014

Honorable Tate Reeves, Lt. Governor of Mississippi
Members of the Mississippi Senate

Dear Sir or Madam:

If one was to title this letter, it could read as such: "A Plea for Help from the Troopers of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol". As one ponders the title, it makes no sense, even though it is applicable. The phrase "plea for help" from a MS State Trooper simply does not add up. Troopers do not plead or beg, and should never have reason to do so. When in need of something, we should only have to ask the proper forum and the request be granted. We ask not unreasonable requests, ever. It is not our nature, having been trained to do our jobs and accomplish our goals with what we have been given. We do it without complaint or regard to our own desires. Allow me to explain, with no disrespect intended toward any other law enforcement agency in the state.

The Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol (MHP) has always had, and will continue to have a rich, meaningful and proud tradition. In the grueling Patrol School that all MS State Troopers endure, we are instilled with the motto: Courtesy, Service and Safety. During those long weeks, we had pounded into our brains that the order of service in our lives should be the following: to serve our God, family, country and state (in that order) with honor and integrity. We all drove away from graduation with our heads held high, dressed and pressed in, literally, the sharpest uniform in the country, with great pride and humility in our hearts. We were ready to "hit the road" and put into practice all that we had learned through our own blood, sweat and tears. In our minds, we had just put on the last uniform we will ever wear, since we were just indoctrinated into the greatest law enforcement agency in the state, very possibly the nation. You could simply ask any Trooper from any other state what he or she thinks of MS State Troopers, and you would quickly learn the respect and honor we command. For our career, we have chosen a profession where the bar could not be higher and the duty not more serious and necessary. We chose to take on this unbelievably important and necessary burden and could hardly wait to start. We were more than willing to serve the citizens of the state of Mississippi, and those who travel through our great state.

These things are imbedded so deeply in our hearts and minds, that the will to see those responsibilities through to fruition never leaves. Then, over time, sadly, reality sets in. We are not seen and treated as we should be by the state government which we serve. At the very least, we are not compensated or respected as such. All of the following eventually dawns on us and negatively affects each of us in various and sundry ways.

We realize that our salaries with respect to years of service, when compared to other state's Troopers, and even when compared to other law enforcement agencies within our own state, is poor, embarrassing and not respectable.

We eventually realize that we must secure a second job in order to provide for our families. That second job often pays more per hour, with comparable benefits, than the job for which we have a passion, being a MS State Trooper! Remember the order of service: Family comes before our job, even with the oath! We see our classmates leave MHP and take other jobs, law enforcement jobs in some cases mind you, because of greater salary, greater benefits, better chance of advancement, etc.

We realize that some of the equipment with which we risk our very lives is sub-par and antiquated. We realize that we will have to drive our current patrol vehicle until the wheels practically fall off (greater than 150,000 hard-driven miles) before we are issued another one because of the vehicle budget we are given.

We realize that the bullet proof vest that was issued to us, and that we wear daily to insure that we will return home to our families after each shift, is past its shelf life and we will "just have to make do" until we are approved funds to purchase new ones.

We realize that we were eligible and entitled to a Reclassification, otherwise known as "Step-Rank", twenty-two months prior that we did not receive because our budget did not allow it. Then, to make matters worse, when we do receive the rank and pay, we are not back-paid for the months in which we should have been receiving more. This is demoralizing, considering that the guaranteed rank and pay every four years, similar to the military, is often the only thing troopers have to look forward to, and the only thing that compensates for such a low starting salary. Promotional opportunities are limited in our agency, so our Reclassifications are often the only chances we have for any advancement at all. They are essential to morale and part of what keeps us here.

We realize that the Troopers in surrounding states, who have comparable time on the job and rank, far exceed us in pay and benefits. We realize that Troopers in surrounding states are allowed to compensate their salaries with overtime, using their state issued patrol cars and equipment, because their legislatures finally found simple ways to show their appreciation for their Troopers' tireless and extremely important work. To put it simply, we "wake up and smell the coffee" that we have been slighted in many ways.

I know not of a Trooper that has not gone well beyond the scope of his duties to assist or aid a member of the general public, including many members of the Mississippi legislature. We do things such as take money out of our own pockets to bring fuel to a cold, stranded motorist in the early hours of a morning. We give courtesy transports to stranded motorists when all our duty calls for is to have our dispatch get a wrecker en route to assist them. We lend our issued patrol coat to the victim of a motor vehicle accident instead of watching them shiver. We will continue to do the job for which we were called, injustices corrected or not, but should we have to do so?? Should the victims of a motor vehicle accident have to wait two hours for a Trooper to arrive at the scene of their accident because he was covering four counties, due to a shortage of manpower, not mismanagement of Troopers?? There have been shifts, in the very recent past, when one Master Sergeant (supervisor) and two Troopers were covering an entire District/Troop (9 to 10 counties). That is absolutely ludicrous! Either pay us for doing the work of two Troopers, or for goodness sake, fund a patrol school each year for the next few years!! You could ask any Trooper, and most of us believe it would take at least three to five consecutive years of Patrol Schools for us to feel any "real" relief.

Most of this letter was written in respect to injustices and mismanagement of MHP by our own state government, but I ask this simple question: Who really gets "the short end of the stick" if the status quo remains the same for the decisions made by the Mississippi State Legislature with respect to the annual budget and funding of the "needs", not the "wants", of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol? Is it not the general public that really suffers??? Yes, troopers and their families are hurting, but the public ultimately pays the price. Does all of the aforementioned not take a toll on the Troopers and affect their performance in a negative manner, even if unintentionally? With all due respect, we are doing "more with less" than we ever have in our entire history. Now is the time to right the wrongs and give justice to the injustices! As Mississippi State Troopers, we will continue to go above and beyond the call of duty, even if nothing changes, but ask yourself this: Does quality and performance not improve as the conditions and benefits do so? INDEED!

Our state needs us, and we need your support!

With Sincerity and Due Respect,

A Proud Mississippi State Trooper

"A Trooper's Plea For Help"

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"A Trooper's Plea For Help"

SIGNATURE	DISTRICT
W. C. Smith	Troop C - MBI
Alcha	Motor Carrier / Troop D
Edoardo Law	Troop D - MHP
Derrick Wallin	Troop D - MHP
Robert Devozes	Troop D - MHP
W. C. Smith	Troop D MHP
W. C. Smith	Troop D MHP
Robert Harris	Troop D
Justin Wade	Troop D
Drew K. Nelson	Troop D
Robert K. K.	Troop D
Walt. Phelip	Troop D
Ala G. Kirk	Troop D
Jayson	Troop D
Christopher B. Bannoy	Motor Carrier / Troop D
Christopher Jimenez	Troop D
Andre J. Cartledge	Troop D (MBI)
W. C. Smith	Troop D
M. M. M.	Troop D
Richard Peoples	Troop D
Ben K. K.	Troop D
John J. J.	Troop D
C. Adair D33	Troop D
Arthur P. P. N18	Troop D
Thomas M. Mullin (D-31)	Troop D
Jan Sheffer (D-32)	Troop D
Roger P. P. P-23	Troop D
Edward Crozens D-10	Troop D
Ch. J. J.	Troop D
C. M. M. D-00	Troop D

"A Trooper's Plea For Help"

SIGNATURE	DISTRICT
Justin Edge E-13	Troop E
Tom H E-15	Troop E
Althea Withers E-16	Troop E
Tom De E-24	Troop E
Ben Kead E-26	Troop E
Mark E-40	Troop E
A.M.B. E-36	Troop E
William Foster E-33	Troop E
John Lamb E-31	Troop E
Timothy Buckley E-28	Troop E
Christopher Smith E-27	Troop E
Robert D Anderson E-46	Troop E
Leo Hampton, Jr. E-49	Troop E
Larry A. Edman E-55	Troop-E
Juan Jones R-13	Troop E
Rae Lane U-67	Troop E
Dan Buckle R-33	Troop E
John E-8	Troop E
John U-33	Troop E
Frank E-113	Troop E
Charles E-2	Troop E
John E-5	Troop E
John E-4	Troop E
Shirley G. D. E-43	Troop E
Bill E-7	Troop-E
North E-43	Troop E
John E-333	Troop E
John E-13	TROOP E
John E-18	Troop E
Captain Walter Brown E-00	Troop E

"A Trooper's Plea For Help"

SIGNATURE	DISTRICT	
Larry J. Conn G-3		5
Jeffrey Vardach G-4		5
Chris Miller G-2		5
Arac Bell G-11		5
Bob M. Abbott G-25		5
John G-33		5
Brad Weston G-24		5
Tom G-16		5
James Duntr G-5		5
John W. G-34		5
Matthew B. Stewart G-31		5
John G-50		5
Marcus D. J. G-10		5
John G-45		5
John G-45		5
Bob Edmond G-55		5
Sen Koldwin G-19		5
Dwayne J. G-51		5
Ellis B. Smith G-37		5
John G-30		5
John G-35		5
John G-26		5
Derrick B. Korn G-47		5
Fred G-1		5
John U-35		5
Kelly M. Bair B-15		5
Ray S. Lamm U-55		5
John U-25		5
John G-8		5
John G		5
Erin C. Mobley G-57		5
Mr. Davis R-35		5

"A Trooper's Plea For Help"

SIGNATURE	DISTRICT
<i>[Signature]</i> J-04	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-1	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-3	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-3	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-10	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-25	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-53	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-14	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-55	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-13	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-51	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-9	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-42	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-34	7
<i>[Signature]</i> 427	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-21	7
<i>[Signature]</i> B-67	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-35	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-46	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-36	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-38	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-45	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-16	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-27	7
<i>[Signature]</i> J-18	7
<i>[Signature]</i> B-86	7
<i>[Signature]</i> B-27	7
<i>[Signature]</i> B-57	7
<i>[Signature]</i> B-17	7
<i>[Signature]</i> V-108	7

"A Trooper's Plea For Help"

SIGNATURE	DISTRICT
Richard [Signature] K-16	8
[Signature] K-23	8
Verde [Signature] K-19	8
Richard [Signature] K-46	8
James [Signature] B3B	B - K
[Signature] K-44	8
Robert [Signature] K-40	8
Kevin Burnett K-15	8
Justin [Signature] K-47	8
[Signature] K21	8
[Signature] K57	8
[Signature] K2	8
[Signature] K4	8
[Signature] K-27	8
[Signature] K-26	8
[Signature] K52	8
[Signature] K12	8
[Signature] K-14	8
[Signature] K43	8
Joseph Johnson K24	8
[Signature] K-22	8
Robin Robertson K-28	8
William [Signature] K-77	8
[Signature]	8
[Signature] K-45	8
[Signature] K5	8
Walter [Signature]	8
Johnny Donnie K-48	8

