



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

Colonel Gary T. Settle
Superintendent

(804) 674-2000

Lt. Colonel Tracy S.
Russillo
Deputy Superintendent

June 22, 2020

To the People of Virginia,

Sometimes it is difficult to realize the magnitude of the moment, especially while it is still fluid and evolving. However, as hindsight illuminates the path we've traveled, we will inevitably reflect back and recognize the significance of this very moment in history. We are on the edge of transformation.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history". His words are as true today as they were when he spoke them. Communities have risen and demanded change, and we hear your voices.

As Superintendent, I believe it is important for the people of Virginia to know that over the last two years the Virginia State Police has taken an introspective look at the agency. We have been working to instill meaningful advancements in our policing philosophy and practices. We have rewritten our mission, vision, and values and are putting the final touches on a strategic plan that focuses on diversity and appreciates our communities and people as our partners. It emphasizes a customer service culture, embraces community outreach, commits to adapting to changing community expectations, and being leaders in improving the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

In recent days I've received numerous letters from across the Commonwealth with countless suggestions regarding hiring, training, and law enforcement reforms. We greatly appreciate receiving your inquiries and we are always open to embracing changes to best serve the Commonwealth. Please rest assured the men and women of the Virginia State Police undergo a rigorous background investigation and intensive training in a wide variety of topics, including bias free policing, *Fair and Impartial Policing*, cultural diversity, de-escalation, and critical incident training. Training is ongoing, constantly evolving, and occurs throughout an employee's entire career. We track indicators of employee stress/mental wellness and routinely evaluate their physical fitness. We have strong policies and rigorous reviews in place regarding use of force and complaints of misconduct. We also hold our employees accountable for their actions. However, the Virginia State Police is not beyond reproach and we recognize there is still much work to be done to gain the trust and confidence of every person we serve.

I am extremely proud of the professionalism of the Virginia State Police employees. Every day I see an overwhelming sense of duty, a desire to make a difference, and an unbridled determination to be part of the solution in the hearts of the men and women who call themselves Virginia State Troopers. Please rest assured, we strive hard to serve you and we will continue to do so.

The movement before us has illustrated there is a demand for reforms and the Virginia State Police remain very optimistic about the future. We embrace this opportunity to be a part of the solution by engaging in meaningful dialogue with our communities and our legislators to shape the future. We are confident in what we can achieve when we work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary T. Settle".

Superintendent