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**Government of the District of Columbia**



**Metropolitan Police Department**

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Testimony of  
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Chief of Police

***Proposed FY2015 Budget for the  
Metropolitan Police Department***

Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety  
Tommy Wells, Chair  
Council of the District of Columbia

May 2, 2014

John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20004

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Good morning, Chairman Wells, Members of the Committee, and members of the public. As the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), I am pleased to testify before you today in support of Mayor Gray's proposed Fiscal Year 2015 budget.

Briefly, the FY15 budget provides funding from all sources of \$514.2 million and 4,568 full-time equivalent positions, or FTEs. This is an increase of \$5.5 million, or 1.1 percent from the approved FY 2014 budget. This includes full year funding for the 3 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) provided in April 2013 and an additional 3 percent COLA in FY 2015 for the civilian and the non-union sworn members of the Department. The FY14 budget includes sufficient funds to maintain the sworn strength at 4,000 officers.

Most of MPD's budget, 85 percent, is for personal services (PS). The remaining 15 percent of the total budget – approximately \$76.8 million dollars – covers a variety of Nonpersonal Services (NPS), including specialized law enforcement purchases – such as uniforms, firearms, ammunition, as well as contracts for the Police and Fire Clinic, fleet, automated traffic enforcement, and information technology. Of the total budget, only \$4.3 million, or less than one percent, is not tied up in obligated spending, such as salaries, benefits, and contracts for goods and services.

With a 1.9 percent increase in the proposed local budget, this represents the largest increase in our budget in the past six budgets. But it is important to put this in context. From FY 2008 through the FY2014 budget, the Department's local budget increased just one-tenth of one percent (0.1%).<sup>1</sup> Over this time, PS spending on salaries and benefits increased 6 percent, and our NPS spending decreased 44 percent. The Department has been able to succeed – and drive down crime – during times of tight budgets through sound and careful management of valuable resources.

For instance, overtime was historically a primary cost-driver for MPD budget overruns. That is certainly no longer the case. Working aggressively with the court and prosecutors, MPD has been able to encourage needed reforms that reduced court-related overtime costs for the District and freed up on-duty officers to be on the street instead of waiting for trials or meetings. As a result, court overtime has decreased every year since FY 2009. In FY2013, it was 63 percent lower than in FY09. Similarly, MPD has consistently reduced other law enforcement related overtime hitting the local budget through better oversight and management of overtime hours. Local overtime not associated with court or automated traffic enforcement is now regularly only a third of what it was prior to FY 2008.

In addition, our fuel usage has declined in each of the past five years; in FY13, the department used 12 percent less fuel than in FY08. As an initial matter, when I became Chief of Police, I implemented strict accountability on take home vehicles. The Department has replaced many of our larger vehicles with smaller more fuel efficient vehicles. We have also installed almost 100 IdleRight units in marked patrol vehicles. The IdleRight system is designed to reduce fuel consumption, engine

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<sup>1</sup> To allow for an appropriate comparison, historical budget figures were adjusted to address two major policy changes: the movement of fixed costs and facility management to the Department of General Services, and the movement of the Automated Traffic Enforcement program costs from a special purpose revenue fund to the local budget.

idle time, engine wear, and the maintenance service life of emergency vehicles that run emergency lights for extended periods of time.

Investments that have made routine police work more efficient are even more important than cost-cutting. Laptops and handheld devices have enabled officers and detectives to do more work from the field – completing reports, identifying suspects, and solving crimes without having to go back to a desk. An online distance training program implemented six years ago enables officers to spend more time on patrol instead of in a classroom. Now, tens of thousands of hours of training are delivered online each year, allowing our officers to spend more time on patrol.

While the city was dealing with tighter finances and even now as the budget is healthier, the Department has been doing its share to conserve resources. As public servants, this is as important as our commitment to safeguard the city. But we must continue to invest in public safety. Mayor Gray has been and remains committed to hiring police officers, but because we are still recovering from the disinvestment during the recession, our authorized sworn staffing of 4,000 officers is still one percent lower now than it was in FY2008. Over the same time period, the city's residential population has grown nine percent. The boom in evening and weekend population has been fueled by skyrocketing development. In just the past six years, the Nationals moved from RFK Stadium to its permanent ballpark. DCUSA opened in Columbia Heights, anchored by major retail. And NoMA and Capitol Riverfront moved into major growth periods, anchoring thriving business and entertainment centers.

These changes are helping to make the District even more vibrant, and I am proud to lead the Department playing such an important role in furthering the public safety that makes all of this growth possible. But our successes should not be a reason to plunder our budget, so I would remind the Council that continued full funding of the Department's proposed budget is critical. In particular, the "retirement bubble" that we have been anticipating for several years is here. The bubble has come about because between 1989 and about 1991, the Department hired well over 1,500 officers, with a peak in 1990. All of the members hired during that time become eligible to retire after 25 years of service and once they reach age 50. The retirement bubble has just begun to hit, and retirements are already up 26 percent so far this year.<sup>2</sup> By the end of this fiscal year, total attrition will probably reach or even exceed 250 members, compared to 197 in FY13 and far outpacing annual attrition rates in the past 15 years. By FY15, it is likely that attrition will exceed 300 separations. Since our annual hiring capacity is about 300 recruits, we will be losing more than we can hire at that time. To avoid dropping below 4,000 members, we should be hiring at capacity – approximately 300 officers – for the foreseeable future.

## **Budget Support Act**

The Department has requested one important provision in the FY 2015 Budget Support Act. Generally speaking, law enforcement officers are the only individuals authorized to enforce laws and

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<sup>2</sup> October through April: FY13 = 62 retirements; FY14 = 78 retirements

support public safety on public space in the District. Even licensed security guards are not authorized to exercise police authority on public lands.

However, many activities on public space that could create safety issues are sponsored or conducted by private entities. While it is beneficial to the District for MPD to ensure the safety of the public, it is not necessarily the best use of District taxpayer funds. That is why the Council previously enacted legislation authorizing the Department to engage in what are called “reimbursable details” in specific situations. These are details of MPD officers to support an event that is either on public space – such as a festival or parade – or that has an impact on public space – such as the public congestion sometimes associated with nightlife and entertainment zones. In these scenarios, it is beneficial for the public to have officers on the street, but those officers should not be pulled from regular duty to support these private events or businesses. Instead, under the reimbursable detail program, the Department assigns officers to work overtime which is then paid by the private entity sponsoring the event.

There is, however, a critical gap in the current law. We are not able to charge reimbursable details for things such as escorting hazardous materials or oversize vehicles through the city or fireworks on the Potomac. Subtitle A in Title III of the Budget Support Act would allow MPD to schedule reimbursable details to address these concerns so that officers are working to protect the public, but at a direct cost to the private entity benefitting from the officers’ work, rather than being paid for by District taxpayers.

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I thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you to present the Mayor’s FY15 budget for the Metropolitan Police Department, and my staff and I will be happy to address any questions you may have.