

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK CHIEF JOHN RUSSO, RUTHERFORD PD



The NJSACOP continues to be busy as October rolls on. At the forefront of our concerns and actions is the issue brought to our attention only weeks ago pertaining to a member’s pension being held in abeyance due to being a party in civil litigation. Obviously, I think this issue hits home more so for Chiefs than our subordinates because at any given time we can be named in numerous civil suits by virtue of our positions. However, every sworn officer in the State is at risk of having to deal with having their pension held in abeyance upon retirement if we were to let these actions stand and not challenge them.

At the time of the writing of this article, I am happy to say we have bipartisan legislative support of our request and a bill to correct this issue is imminent. My fingers will remain crossed until we see that fix in place, but I am optimistic on this one. I would like to thank the NJSACOP Elected Board, Mitch Sklar, Chief Pepperman, and our Government Relations team that really made a push to make this is a priority. I also need to recognize Retired Chief Pat O’Dea, Counsel for the Bergen County Police Chiefs Association for bringing this to the NJSACOP’s attention and providing a detailed analysis of what had occurred.

When this bill gets passed, I will surely pass along the names of those legislators who took this on without a second thought so we can thank them.

As was mentioned at October’s meeting, our Wellness App is up and running. The Wellness Committee will continue to fine tune the platform and add information and resources as we deem appropriate. I just want to reassure all that your usage of the app is strictly confidential. The NJSACOP will receive quarterly reports pertaining to how often the app was accessed and used, but no further analytics are recorded or reported. I strongly encourage any of us who are having a difficult time dealing with our current situations to access the app and contact a Peer Support Chief. There are always brighter days ahead if we can just persevere through the trying times.

Last month, the NJSACOP participated in a [traffic safety PSA](#). Please take some time and reference this video on your social media pages and websites. It is really shocking how tragic impaired and distracting driving is. Unfortunately, those numbers continue to rise. As Chiefs, we send our officers to the streets to enforce these issues every day, and that is exactly what Allendale Officer Mark Dunn Jr. and Saddle River Officer John Latka were doing on the evening of October 5, 2024, when they were struck on Route 17 by a suspected impaired driver. Both officers sustained injuries and as of the writing of this article, Officer Dunn Jr. was still hospitalized. Please keep Officer Dunn Jr. as well as every officer we assign to handle the dangerous aspects of this profession in our thoughts and prayers.

Many thanks to all the law enforcement and first responders who are rising to the challenges in all the areas devastated by hurricanes Helene and Milton. Once again, law enforcement rises above all the nonsensical rhetoric and shows what we are all about!

Finally, don’t forget to sign up your personnel for the 2024 NJSACOP Annual Mid-Year 1-Day Conference on December 5, 2024.

NJSACOP Monthly State Chiefs Briefings

November 7, 2024	December 5, 2024 (Mid Year Meeting—Ocean Place Resort, Long Branch, NJ)
January 9, 2025 (date change due to holiday)	February 6, 2025
March 6, 2025	April 3, 2025
May 1, 2025	June 5, 2025
September 4, 2025	October 2, 2025
November 6, 2025	