

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Whitman Underscores Commitment to Diversity in NJSP Pledges Thorough, Comprehensive and Fair Investigation of Turnpike Shooting

Gov. Christie Whitman today reiterated her commitment to diversity among the ranks of the New Jersey State Police.

"The State of New Jersey is committed to ensuring that the ranks of our state law enforcement personnel more closely reflect the diversity of our people. We are continuing in our efforts to reach out to qualified minority applicants for enrollment in the State Police Academy and these efforts have made a significant difference," Gov. Whitman said.

"Currently 17 percent of the NJSP enlisted personnel are minority or female. In addition, nearly one-third of the individuals who recently took the test for admission into the 118th class of the State Police were minorities or women" the Governor said. "Twenty years ago, minorities and women accounted for less than two percent of the force.

"As I have said throughout my term, I welcome the input of organizations that can provide insight into ways that we can improve our minority outreach efforts and help bolster the number of minorities throughout state government," she said in response to a press conference by the NAACP in front of the State House today.

The Governor also indicated that there will be a thorough, complete and fair investigation of the shooting that occurred on the New Jersey Turnpike on April 23, 1998.

"We take every incident involving deadly force seriously and we have in place an established Attorney General protocol to guarantee an exhaustive and fair investigation. That protocol will be followed with respect to the shooting on the Turnpike," she said.

"A thorough investigation will be conducted and findings will be made by a grand jury," she added.

"All of the citizens of the state deserve a thorough investigation to determine if the use of deadly force in this instance was appropriate and justified," she said.