



Outlook

Formal PBA Objection – Improper Assignment and Misuse of Investigative Personnel

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To Mitchell McGuire <Mitchell.McGuire@njecpo.org>; Alexander Albu <Alexander.Albu@njecpo.org>; Theodore Stephens <Theodore.Stephens@njecpo.org>

Cc Mark Brong <Mark.Brong@njecpo.org>; Anthony DeMattia <Anthony.Demattia@njecpo.org>

Good morning,

As President of PBA Local 325, I am formally bringing up concerns about the inappropriate assignment of investigative personnel to duties well outside their professional responsibilities and the mission of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

The PBA has learned that investigative personnel have been used to perform tasks such as hanging and mounting televisions, as well as cleaning and maintaining fish tanks for members of command staff.

These assignments are inappropriate, unjustifiable, and must cease.

County detectives are sworn law enforcement professionals tasked to investigate criminal activity, developing cases, gathering evidence, and supporting the prosecution of criminal offenders. Under N.J.S.A. 2A:157-2, their statutory purpose is to assist the prosecutor in detecting, apprehending, arresting, and convicting offenders.

Mounting televisions, performing general building maintenance, and cleaning aquariums are not investigative or law enforcement functions. The County employs or has access to building maintenance and facilities personnel specifically suited to handle such responsibilities. No reasonable justification exists for diverting trained investigative personnel from their designated duties to perform work that should be assigned to the appropriate maintenance staff.

Beyond the obvious misuse of personnel, these practices raise legitimate concerns regarding fiscal responsibility, workplace safety, and the proper expenditure of public resources. Assigning taxpayer funded law enforcement professionals to perform routine maintenance is an inefficient use of specialized personnel. Requiring detectives to install or mount equipment also raises unnecessary questions regarding training, physical safety, liability, and responsibility should an injury or property damage occur.

Of particular concern is using investigative personnel to clean or maintain fish tanks for command staff. The PBA questions how such assignments serve any legitimate investigative, prosecutorial, or operational purpose. Investigative personnel are not employed to perform housekeeping or personal-service tasks for supervisors or members of command staff. The authority to supervise employees should never be confused with an entitlement to use those employees for work unrelated to their professional responsibilities.

The PBA recognizes management's authority to direct personnel and assign legitimate operational duties. However, management should exercise that authority reasonably, professionally, and in furtherance of the agency's mission. It should not be used to turn trained investigators into maintenance workers or personal assistants.

Accordingly, **PBA Local 325 formally requests that management immediately discontinue these practices as well as ensure** that maintenance, installation, cleaning, and similar non-investigative responsibilities are directed to the appropriate personnel.

I further request written confirmation that these assignments will cease and that investigative personnel will not be subjected to adverse treatment for raising legitimate concerns about these duties.

Our members are trained law enforcement professionals. Their time, expertise, and responsibilities should be treated accordingly. The Prosecutor's Office should set an example of responsible management and professional leadership, not normalize practices that undermine both.

I look forward to management's response.

Respectfully,

President

PBA Local 325