**15563, William Parenti**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

It’s great to see all of you Chiefs of Police, members of the FBI, CIA, and Secret Service as well as your significant others. For once we get to gather together for a night of celebration instead of joining forces to solve crimes and hunt the bad guys. I’m sure all the spouses are glad about that.

Where have all the good guys gone? That's a question law abiding citizens may well ask when they talk about crime in their communities. My answer to them is that WE are the good guys. WE are the ones who put our lives on the line to protect them from criminals. I would like to remind them that we are also, of course, ordinary citizens too and we suffer when a child is abused or a loved one killed in a car crash. As Peter Kirby said “Just because you put on a uniform doesn't mean you hang up your humanity.” There are, of course, great frustrations in our work. Sometimes we feel that we are losing the battle against organized crime or gang activity. We are the people on the ground who see the various causes of crime every day.

Although it is not our job to change laws, we can and should use our influence to bear on our lawmakers to tackle these causes of crime. We have worked very hard with legislators from both the House and Senate and both sides of the isle to try to prevent certain bills from passing and to push for bills that we feel are needed. We all know the Class 3 special bill means a lot to President Chris Wagner. Let me tell you just how much.

During a recent meeting with the speaker of the assembly Chris pulled out all the stops to get this passed. First he said, “You know that his term is ending June 29th and that it would be nice to have it done by then.” The assemblymen said, “I may be able to get it on for June 20.” Chris came back, “Wow, that is my birthday; what a great present.”

It was getting ugly as politics usually does. We all know the frustrations, of course, but we also receive great job satisfaction. When we find a lost child or capture an armed robbery suspect we feel good and we should. When we break up a criminal gang after months of hard work we are happy. I don’t suppose any of us like to do paperwork but there is something very satisfying in closing such a case. Today I feel both proud and privileged to be inaugurated as the 104th president of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police. As some of you may know it’s a family tradition to serve in the police in different capacities.

In the newspapers my family has been called the Blue Bloods of New Jersey. Let me explain why. My paternal grandfather, Peter, was a police officer in Italy. My father, Anthony Sr., was a police officer for 40 years and Chief of Police in Fanwood for 22 years. My brother Anthony Jr. served in Summit, New Jersey for 26 years, retired as a Sergeant, and is now an Assistant Prosecutor with the Somerset County Prosecutor’s Office. My son, William Jr. joined the North Plainfield Police department in 2012. When I think about all these policemen in the family I wonder how there is any crime in New Jersey at all! Tonight my family is making history with our 112 year State Chiefs Association. Proudly tonight will mark the first time a son will follow in his father’s footsteps as president. I guess that makes me Tom Selleck here. Do you think I look as good as he does? Seriously, this was one of the factors that enticed me to run. I truly value family dedication to our chosen professions and I am very proud of the contribution my family has made to law enforcement.

Unfortunately, it is an always an ongoing battle between the good guys and the bad guys. The Sheriffs in the Western films only had to catch the rustlers. They knew exactly who the bad guys were. There will always be such local criminals. Today, though, we also have to tackle international, white collar and cybercrime which is far more sophisticated (Mention partnerships needed). I believe it is a job we do very well indeed.

Children used to be told to ask a policeman to find their parents if they ever became lost. I want that to be the bedrock of the way we do things here in New Jersey. I believe, you see, that the police should be seen to be friends of the community. That is why our Association has worked hard this past year with the NAACP, "National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)”, the National Latino Leadership Alliance and many other community groups. We believe that if we succeed in establishing such good relationships within the communities we serve we can drastically cut minor crimes and the police can then concentrate on more serious issues. I sincerely want our communities to know that we care about them and that they can trust us to take care of communities. If we have their trust, then we will have their cooperation in fighting crime at all levels.

There is a perception that police are corrupt and I have no doubt there are some bad apples in our profession. The media is partly responsible. They love headlines about corruption or misconduct in the force. They rarely give us the credit that is due to those who do a dangerous job day in and day out. It is only when an officer is shot that we get the recognition we deserve.

When a person becomes a police officer their greatest act of bravery has been accomplished. What they do after that is all in the line of duty.

They do not think of the dangers of their profession. Why else would they go running into a burning building or shots fired call that everyone else is running away from. Sadly, you don’t have to look back far as that very scenario played out in Orlando Florida just two weeks back. I believe that at least 99% of our members are there because they believe in what they do. Otherwise, they would not work the hours they work, endure the horrors they often see and take the risks they take for the salaries they are paid. I know they believe in the basic necessity for law and order. So do their families.

Today I want to thank my wife Eileen, my children Billy and Danielle and my parents for allowing me, without complaint, the freedom to work the long hours I have done. Without their support I could not have achieved this position. I have no doubt that the reason many serving officers have children who follow them into the police force is that they recognize the importance of the work being done by their parents. I would be remiss if I did not to thank my parents for the outstanding job they did raising me, and I guess you did ok with my brother Tony and sister Nancy. They didn’t turn out too bad.

To continue building relationships is an ongoing one. Today I want to thank my predecessor Chief Chris Wagner for the work he has already done. I hope to be equally committed in my term as President. It is, of course, necessary for Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to work together to tackle crime, build trust with the public and regain the respect with the media. Policing is a complex business, but it is in all our interests to make the criminals pay for what they have done. I hope that in my term of office I will help to make New Jersey a place where citizens have a renewed respect for our profession. They feel safe, and know the police are friends rather than enemies as portrayed by the media and some politicians. I cannot do that alone. I need your help and that of all law-abiding citizens. So, I am open to your suggestions and advice. I want our citizens to be convinced that we are not just the bad traffic stop or person directing you out of your way because of a closed road. Remember, even a little idea can change the world. Think great needs require great innovations. So please remember it is in all our interests to work together to fight crime.

As my father’s campaign slogan was 26 years ago, "Let’s Make it Better", I am thinking of using some of the comments made by FBI Director FBI Director Comey who said, “Let me be transparent about my affection for cops. When you dial 911, whether you are white or black, the cops come, and they come quickly, and they come quickly whether they are white or black. That’s what cops do, in addition to all of the other hard and difficult and dangerous and frightening things that they do. They respond to homes in the middle of the night where a drunken father, wielding a gun, is threatening his wife and children. They pound up the back stairs of an apartment building, not knowing whether the guys behind the door they are about to enter are armed, or high, or both.” Law Enforcement, Race: Renewal Requires Truth