

# *State Troopers Fraternal Association of New Jersey*

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For immediate release:

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Sadly, the tragic events of the accident of September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006 continue to cause everyone involved great heartache and anguish. No words ever spoken could express my profound sorrow and remorse for the loss of Jacqueline and Christina Becker. They and their family continue to be in my thoughts and prayers.

Today's decision by the Cape May County prosecutor to indict Trooper Rob Higbee, knowing full well that he was performing his sworn duties and operating under his mandate to apprehend violators and in full compliance with the Attorney General guidelines for attempting to stop a violator, appears to fly in the face of the criminal statute, past practice, precedent and current case law. Trooper Higbee's operation of his troop car, which resulted in this tragedy, is woefully devastating but not criminal. It sends a message to everyone in law enforcement that, despite the rules that are in place, if you make an honest but tragic mistake, you will be fighting for your freedom just for trying to do your job. Rest assured that the heartache and pain Christina and Jacqueline's Mom, Dad, family, friends and everyone is living with is not going to be resolved by the agonizing process that will play itself out in the courts over the next few months.

I firmly believe in Trooper Higbee's innocence and will defend him with every resource and means available. The facts will show that, in the performance of his sworn duties, Trooper Higbee never violated a criminal statute. I regret the pain and anguish this is going to cause everyone involved and I hoped that somehow this could be avoided, but I am left with no alternative. No Trooper, no Police Officer should be offered up for political expediency because of a horrible, but very human mistake. The convoluted message this is sending to honest, hardworking cops, who are just trying their best to do their job with the plethora of problems and obstacles that it already comes with cannot be understated. The chilling effect on law enforcement and the public we serve will be monumental.

Again, I cannot express how sorry I am for the immeasurable loss and suffering the Becker family and friends are living with. I pray that the Lord gives them strength and solace, and while it can never lift their pain, all my members continue to extend our most sincere and heartfelt sympathy.

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