

STATE OF CONNECTICUT REHIRES 56 TROOPERS



In August, 56 troopers in the state of Connecticut were laid off in order to help the state to balance its budget. The troopers, all of whom were rookies at the time of the lay offs, were given their jobs back this week. The reason for the re-hiring is the savings to the budget from troopers who have chosen to retire. Forty of the more experienced officers chose to retire this year, which saved the state of Connecticut almost \$2.3 million in salaries. The money needed to pay the 56 laid-off rookie troopers only totaled \$1.9 million. So, in addition to putting an extra 16 officers out on the streets the state will also save several hundred thousand dollars, creating a win-win situation for all parties involved. According to Reuben Bradford, the current commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection as well as a former trooper himself, made a statement on Monday that the layoff notices would be rescinded. This means that the majority of the rookie troopers that were taken out of service will begin to get back out onto the roads between the 7th of October and the 21st of October. The state did not want to lay off the troopers to begin with," But, it was a fiscal reality we were facing, and we couldn't have people on staff that we didn't have money for, in order to pay them," Bradford said. This is not the only lucky break for the state of Connecticut, since a higher than expected number of state employees chose to retire before the changes to the state's retirement system, a number of other positions can be re-filled. The reason for the higher than normal number of retirements is due to changes to the state's labor agreement. This agreement changes the retirement laws for the states employees. The deadline for filing to retire was last Friday. The state has estimated that only about 1000 of the states employees would choose to take this option and file for retirement, but according to Gian-Carl Casa, a spokesman for the Office of Policy and Management, more than 1,500 of the states employees chose to exercise this option. Some of these recently vacated posts will be refilled by new hires, or by more junior employees who will be paid at a lower rate. The decisions about which specific posts are going to be refilled and which posts are going to remain vacant for the foreseeable future is one that individual agencies will make on a case-by-case basis. Meetings are currently in progress about these decisions. The troopers were laid off after their union failed to fully ratify a concessions agreement that the governor needed to help balance the state budget. Unions that ratified the contract were promised four years of no layoffs. The Connecticut State Police Union tried instead to block the layoffs in the court system. They were unsuccessful, despite a 1998 law that requires a minimum staffing level of 1,248 troopers.