§ 70-a. Statewide organized crime task force. 1. There shall be established within the department of law a statewide organized crime task force which, pursuant to the provisions of this section, shall have the duty and power:

(a) To conduct investigations and prosecutions of organized crime activities carried on either between two or more counties of this state or between this state and another jurisdiction;

(b) To cooperate with and assist district attorneys and other local law enforcement officials in their efforts against organized crime.

2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the governor and the attorney general may, and without civil service examination, jointly appoint and employ, fix his compensation, and at pleasure remove, a deputy attorney general in charge of the organized crime task force. The attorney general may, and without civil service examination, appoint and employ, and at pleasure remove, such assistant deputies, accountants and other persons as he deems necessary, determine their duties and, with the approval of the governor, fix their compensation. The payments of salaries and compensation of such officers and employees shall be in the same manner as is prescribed in subdivision eight of section sixty-three of this chapter.

3. The deputy attorney general in charge of the organized crime task force may request and shall receive from the division of state police, the state department of taxation and finance, the state department of labor, the temporary state commission of investigation, and from every department, division, board, bureau, commission or other agency of the state, or of any political subdivision thereof, cooperation and assistance in the performance of his duties. Such deputy attorney general may provide technical and other assistance to any district attorney or other local law enforcement official requesting such assistance in the investigation or prosecution of organized crime cases.

4. The deputy attorney general in charge of the organized crime task force is empowered to conduct hearings at any place within the state, to administer oaths or affirmations, subpoena witnesses, compel their attendance, examine them under oath or affirmation, and require the

production of any books, records, documents or other evidence he may deem relevant or material to an investigation. He is empowered to apply for search warrants pursuant to article six hundred ninety of the criminal procedure law, and, except in exigent circumstances, shall give prior notice of the application to the district attorney of the county in which such a warrant is to be executed, and in such circumstances, shall give such notice as soon thereafter as practicable; provided, however, that the failure to give notice of a search warrant application to a district attorney shall not be a ground to suppress the evidence seized in executing the warrant. He may designate an assistant to exercise any such powers. Every witness attending before such deputy attorney general or his assistant shall be examined privately and the particulars of such examination shall not be made public. If a person subpoenaed to attend upon such inquiry fails to obey the command of a subpoena without reasonable cause, or if a person in attendance upon such inquiry shall, without reasonable cause, refuse to be sworn or to be examined or to answer a question or to produce a book or paper, when ordered so to do by the officer conducting such inquiry, he shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

5. Upon the application of the deputy attorney general in charge of the organized crime task force, the supreme court or a justice thereof may impound any exhibit marked in evidence in any hearing held in connection with an investigation conducted by such deputy attorney general, and may order such exhibit to be retained by, or delivered to and placed in the custody of, such deputy. When so impounded, such exhibit shall not be taken from the custody of such deputy except upon further order of the court or a justice thereof made upon five days notice to such deputy, or upon his application or with his consent.

6. In any hearing held in connection with an investigation conducted by the deputy attorney general in charge of the organized crime task force, the attorney general may confer immunity in accordance with the provisions of section 50.20 of the criminal procedure law, but only after affording the appropriate district attorney the opportunity to be heard in respect to any objections which he may have to the granting of such immunity.

7. With the approval of the governor and with the approval or upon the request of the appropriate district attorney, the deputy attorney general in charge of the organized crime task force, or one of his assistants, may attend in person any term of the county court or supreme court having appropriate jurisdiction, including an extraordinary special or trial term of the supreme court when one is appointed pursuant to section one hundred forty-nine of the judiciary law, or appear before the grand jury thereof, for the purpose of managing and conducting in such court or before such jury a criminal action or proceeding concerned with an offense where any conduct constituting or requisite to the completion of or in any other manner related to such offense occurred either in two or more counties of this state, or both within and outside this state. In such case, such deputy attorney general or his assistant so attending shall exercise all the powers and perform all the duties in respect of such actions or proceedings, which the district attorney would otherwise be authorized or required to exercise or perform. In any of such actions or proceedings the district attorney shall only exercise such powers and perform such duties as are required of him by such deputy attorney general.