



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

3 November 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for the recent announcement by U.S. Attorney General Jefferson B. Sessions III restoring and expanding the Federal asset forfeiture program. In fact, when I testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee in the previous Congress, I felt as though then-Senator Sessions and I were the only ones in the room who appreciated the importance of asset forfeiture in combatting crime.

Asset forfeiture is a vital tool for law enforcement, especially for those State and local agencies who use the equitable sharing program to allow them to reinvest resources to fight crime in their communities. Your Administration restored the program and also standardizes the process for Federal adoption of cases and provides for greater transparency and protections for innocent owners.

However, the FOP remains very concerned that forces in Congress are working to end the asset forfeiture program. Indeed, during the debate on H.R. 3354, the omnibus appropriations act, the House adopted three amendments on voice votes to attack the program by decreasing its funding and imposing restrictions on its use. Mr. President, we do not disagree that reforms to the program may be needed and we are willing to work with Members of Congress to do so, but we feel strongly that the reforms, especially the protections and new transparency directives issued by your Justice Department should be given the chance to work.

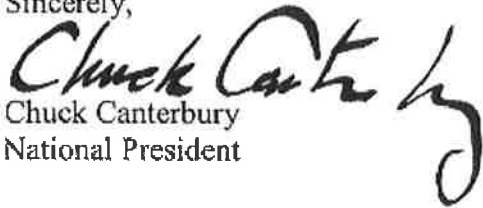
There seems to be a particular hostility to the equitable sharing program, which is of great value to law enforcement, to public safety and to the community, as States use these shared funds for a wide variety of purposes. Like any government program, there can be found instances of abuse and the FOP supports measures to combat such abuses and to improve the integrity of the program. However, proposals to end this decades-long program with documented success in deterring and fighting crime is simply not sound public policy.

The FOP has pointed out to Congress that the Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing contains 59 individual recommendations, a large number of which call for new or additional Federal funds for State and local law enforcement for a variety of purposes. None of

these recommendations suggested changes to the civil asset forfeiture program or for ending the equitable sharing program. At a time when the number of officers are declining, Federal assistance to State and local agencies is lacking, how can this issue be a law enforcement priority?

Mr. President, we know you agree with us on the importance of this program and its role in keeping our nation and our communities safe. We will continue to defend this critical program on Capitol Hill and rely on your leadership on this issue going forward. Thank you as always for your consideration of the views of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police. If I can be of any additional assistance or provide further information on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Senior Advisor, Jim Pasco, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,



Chuck Canterbury
National President

cc: The Honorable Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Nancy P. Pelosi, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate
The Honorable Dianne G. Feinstein, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate