



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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## **TERROR IN ORLANDO**

*Law enforcement needs more tools, not less, to respond to incidents*

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, extended his heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the terrorist attack on the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

“I was sickened to hear of this weekend’s violence, but I fear it may not be the last time our nation will face such an attack,” Canterbury said. “The reality is that our nation must be more vigilant and prepared for such incidents—and that means we need our law enforcement officers to be able to carry their firearms in large venues and vital equipment programs need to be restored.”

Retired and off-duty law enforcement officers may carry firearms under the provisions of a Federal law, the Law Enforcement Officers’ Safety Act (LEOSA), but the statute allows private businesses to prohibit carriage on their premises. This was the case at the Pulse nightclub. The LEOSA statute requires retired officers to meet active duty standards for firearms training annually. For all of these reasons, Congress elected to create an exemption to local and State law prohibiting the carriage of firearms. We believe that all businesses and private property owners should permit active and retired law enforcement officers to carry their firearms if they choose to do so.

“If there were any off-duty or retired law enforcement officers there that night, they would have had to leave their firearm at home,” Canterbury said. “These terrorists who have pledged their allegiance to organizations like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are selecting targets based on the amount of death and injury they can inflict—mass murder and casualty events. Well-attended events and areas are being deliberately targeted by these radical killers who do not intend or expect to survive the assault.”

In response to the terrorist attack in Orlando, law enforcement officers set off a controlled explosion to distract the shooter and used an armored vehicle to breach the walls of the nightclub. One of the responding officers was struck in the head, but his life was saved by his anti-ballistic helmet. These types of equipment were once readily available through Federal programs designed to assist State and local law enforcement, but a recent Executive Order has placed these controlled explosives and even anti-ballistic helmets on a “controlled” equipment list. The end result is that this equipment is much more difficult to obtain through Federal programs.

“The Executive Order imposes severe restrictions on law enforcement agencies and their procurement process,” Canterbury said. “For example, the .50 caliber round is now prohibited for

— BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION —

all Federal equipment programs despite the use of these rounds in stopping an attack on the Dallas Police Headquarters by a gunman in an armored vehicle last summer. The vehicle was disabled by officers firing .50 caliber rounds into the engine block. Under the current Executive Order, the anti-ballistic helmet that saved the life of an officer responding to the terrorist attack at the Pulse nightclub is on a 'controlled' list and is much more difficult to obtain through Federal programs. Similarly, the armored vehicle that breached the wall to effect the rescue of the hostages is on the same 'controlled' list. Why? We need these tools to respond to existing threats and incidents—how does it make any sense to reduce the availability of this equipment?"

The FOP has been working with its allies in Congress to restore these Federal programs which provide critical equipment to State and local law enforcement. Two bills, H.R. 4880/S. 2694, the "Protecting Lives Using Surplus (PLUS) Equipment Act," would rollback the Executive Order and provide greater access to equipment through programs administered by the U.S. Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice. Both bills are currently pending in committee.

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States with more than 330,000 members.