



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

64th Biennial National Conference
August 2019

Take Action To Shape Your Future: *How FOP Members Can Influence The Legislative Process*

“Your safety, your job security, and the well-being of your family will be profoundly affected by what happens in Washington in the coming years. The actions that you take now can help shape the future – and if you do not take them, you’ll have no one to blame but yourself for what the future brings.”

- Late Past National President Steve Young

WHAT IS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY?

Legislative advocacy refers to efforts to influence the introduction, enactment, or modification of legislation. The most common means of legislative advocacy is direct lobbying, which entails contacting a legislator, sharing your views on an issue, and asking him or her to vote a specific way on a bill. This can be done with something as easy as a phone call, letter or email, or by a formal meeting.

WHY ADVOCACY?

One of the most important aspects of our system of government is that it is representative—those who make our laws represent us. But how can they represent us unless we let them know what we are thinking? We can and should remind leaders of their responsibilities to their constituents and offer them constructive ideas. If we do, we can bring about public policy changes. It’s not a difficult thing to do, and it doesn’t take a lot of time. It just takes the will to act and speak out for yourself and on behalf of those who may not be able to speak for themselves.

DOES ADVOCACY WORK?

Recent research by the Congressional Management Foundation confirms that advocacy does make a difference. Legislative staffers reported that if a legislator had not reached a firm decision on an issue, individualized letters would have “a lot” of influence.

FOP LEGISLATIVE & GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

The FOP is the oldest, largest, and most respected law enforcement labor organization in our nation’s capital. Grassroots activism allows the FOP to harness the power of its 348,000 members nationwide to target Members of Congress both strategically and tactically.

One major factor of grassroots advocacy is building and maintaining relationships with Members of Congress and their staff. By working in coordination with the National Legislative Office to ensure that

FOP members know how the issues impact them as a voter, will allow us to build a results-oriented advocacy program.

Organization is a key to all kinds of operations, but it's especially important in advocacy work. An advocacy group must be a group, with common goals and a common purpose, and it has to have reliable ways of deciding on action, communicating that decision to everyone involved, and then carrying out the action systematically and effectively.

FOP GRASSROOTS ACTION NETWORK STRUCTURE

The National Legislative Office works in collaboration with the members of the National Legislative Committee to relay information to the State Legislative Contact, who then relays it to the Local Legislative Contact, who will ultimately relay the information to FOP members.

THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE: WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

The Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center is the office of the FOP in Washington, D.C. on Capitol Hill, where a full-time professional staff actively lobbies Congress and the Administration on the issues most important to rank-and-file law enforcement officers. The National Legislative Program is the most active and comprehensive of any law enforcement organization in Washington.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Contact Your Legislator

When contacting your legislator, whether by phone/letter/email, remember to be concise, specific, and support your views with facts. Always be polite and respectful. Stay on message and keep to your main points.

The best method, especially if timing is critical, are phone calls to the lawmaker's office. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment. After identifying yourself as a constituent, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S.__/H.R.__)." State your reasons for your support/opposition to the bill. Ask for your Senator's/Representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call. To contact your U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator, call the Capitol Switchboard and ask to be transferred to your legislator: (202) 224-3121. When

If you would like to send a letter, we recommend that you either fax the letter to your representative's office. The fax number can be found on their website.

Visit Your Legislators: The Most Effective Method

A face-to-face visit with an elected official, or his/her staff, is the most influential form of advocacy. This direct lobbying can be time-consuming, but it can also be fun, interesting and rewarding. Elected officials have very demanding schedules. Don't be disappointed if you have to meet with a staffer. Group visits are particularly effective and increase your chances of getting an appointment.

The National FOP Legislative Office hosts the annual "Day On The Hill". The FOP's Day on the Hill event is a key component of our legislative advocacy strategy and our Grassroots Action Network. Having our members here on Capitol Hill, sitting down with their elected Senators and Representatives has a real and lasting impact on the FOP's ability to move its agenda through Congress. We are coming off of a

very successful Congress, but we need to continue to build on that success and we can't do that without YOU!

Your participation is critical, and while we look forward to seeing old friends and our *Day on the Hill* veterans, we need to see some new faces. Challenge your members who do attend to bring along a lodge member who hasn't yet participated in this event. By increasing the number of officers that lawmakers hear from, the greater effectiveness we will have as an organization. Talk about *Day on the Hill* in your lodge meetings and help us help you by increasing our participation.

We need Congress focused on OUR issues and OUR safety. We need you to help make sure our voice is heard and we need more voices!

Lobbying Tips For FOP Members

- ***Consider Yourself an Information Source:*** Remember, you are the expert on law enforcement. Utilize this opportunity to educate your elected officials about the needs and concerns of law enforcement officers. (Refer to the Legislative Briefing Book provided by the NFOP Legislative Office.) Legislators want to know how a specific issue will affect their districts. Share personal or local experiences about the issues with your legislators. If you don't know the answers to some of their questions—tell them so. Make notes and follow-up with the answers after the meetings.
- ***Know Your Member:*** Be aware of your Member's background, history on law enforcement, and other issues as well as his committee assignments. Visit their webpage and read recent press releases.
- ***Keep It Small:*** The more people in the meeting, the less productive the dialogue. Meeting space, especially on Capitol Hill, is limited. Keep your group small and have a constituent with you whenever possible.
- ***Try to Make Personal Connections:*** Make the legislator aware of any personal connections you may have. No matter how insignificant you may feel it is, if you have friends, relatives, or colleagues in common, let them know. Use personal examples from your own life or the lives of your neighbors.
- ***Be Organized:*** Be on Time. If you are part of a group meeting with an elected official, select a spokesperson to lead the discussion. Know the time frame you are under and highlight a few key issues. Determine who will speak on each issue.
- ***Be Concise:*** Legislators (and staff) have limited time and many demands. Be sure to stay on message on those three top legislative priorities important to law enforcement. You will be lucky to have a full 15 minutes to discuss them with the legislator or staff and it is critical that they understand the importance of them all.
- ***Expect Surprises and Be Flexible:*** Legislators have very unpredictable schedules on session days, causing them to run late or be called away. Don't be disappointed if they have to cut your meetings short. Make the most of them by focusing on a few key issues and following-up with detailed information in writing. Don't be disappointed if you meet with a member of their staff; often they know more details about the issues than their bosses do and they are the ones who advise legislators how to vote.
- ***Anticipate Reactions and Stay on Message:*** After explaining your views, ask the legislators where they stand on the issue. Try to understand their perspective and tailor your approach accordingly. If they are undecided, focus on your message. Respectfully maintain your position, even if you know they don't agree. If they change the subject to avoid getting pinned down on an issue, try to bridge the discussion back to your message.

- **Follow-Up:** Send thank you notes reviewing the issues you discussed. Be sure to send legislators any additional materials requested, including answers to questions for which you didn't have answers, during the meeting. Let them know you are a resource that is available to them in the future.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: BUILDING A BRAND

Make Endorsements, Hold Elected Officials Accountable

If your lodge allows the endorsement of political candidates, we recommend you considering doing so, as it is a valuable tool. If your lodge decides to make an endorsement, be strategic!

Voter Guide

Your lodge may consider distributing a Voter Guide to members or other registered voters. Some information you may consider including in the guide: which candidates/ballot questions are endorsed by your lodge; etc. Essentially, your voter guide should provide accurate information that will help inform voters when making the decision of who/what to vote for. To determine the record of incumbents, we recommend referencing our Congressional Scorecard. If you'd like to obtain the scorecard for your Member of Congress, please contact the FOP's Legislative Office.

Financial Support

If there is a candidate that is a true friend to your lodge, consider either making a contribution to their campaign or participating in a fundraiser to help them raise money. Financial support is extremely valuable to candidates.

Frequent Interaction With Elected Officials

In an effort to build and strengthen the relationship between your lodge and your Federal, State and local elected officials, we suggest that you interact with them frequently.

If your lodge is having an event, invite elected officials to attend and perhaps give a few brief remarks. If there are elected officials that have been staunch allies to the FOP, your lodge may want to consider holding an event for that elected official to present them with an award or some other form of recognition.

If there is an issue that may be solved by legislation, consider inviting elected officials to join you on a ride along so they can see the problem first-hand.

Stay Informed On Legislative Issues

When it comes to the Federal legislative issues, two simple ways you can stay informed on issues pertaining to FOP members is by signing up for the FOP's Weekly Legislative Updates as well as visiting FOP.net to see the FOP's recent press releases, talking points, and letters to policy makers. To sign up for the FOP'S Weekly Legislative Updates, please contact the FOP Headquarters in Nashville: (615) 399-0900.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVOCATE

Use Social Media for your State and local lodges

As the *Voice of Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers*, we must continuously adapt in order to make our voices heard. The new social media is a very powerful thing; allowing the FOP to have intimate, personal conversations with hundreds, if not thousands of members and potential members, supporters and opponents, the general public and elected officials. We urge all FOP lodges to capitalize

on the opportunity to communicate with others via social media; at any time of the day or night, anywhere in the world.

Using social media to engage your local and State elected officials, as well as your elected Representatives and Senators in Congress, is a terrific way to ensure that the issues important to law enforcement get their attention. Tools such as Facebook and Twitter should not be an afterthought—lodges cannot just set up a Twitter account, publish one or two “Tweets”, and expect hundreds of its members to start “following”.

When posting content, keep at it and be consistent with both, activity and messaging. Make it part of a daily task or habit to either post, share, or “like” something. Each lodge must determine what that “something” is: what is your goal? Once you have a goal—it may relate to legislation, community activity, or otherwise—it is important that you remember to stay on message.

The National Legislative Office’s social media goal is to use social media platforms—primarily Twitter and Facebook—to reach our members and advocate for our legislative agenda by frequently posting press releases and updates on legislative activity as well as sharing events and news. Many members of the media and elected officials have interacted with us on Twitter helping spread our announcements and positions.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Top Legislative Priorities

- ***H.R. 141/S. 521, the “Social Security Fairness Act,”*** would restore full Social Security Benefits for law enforcement officers by repealing both the “Windfall Elimination Provision” (WEP) and the “Government Pension Offset” (GPO). As of this writing, H.R. 141 has a total of 191 cosponsors and S. 521 has a total of 30 cosponsors.
- ***H.R. 1195/S. 473, the “Law Enforcement Officers’ Equity Act,”*** would expand the definition of “law enforcement officer” for salary and retirement benefits to include all Federal law enforcement officers. As of this writing, H.R. 1195 has a total of 37 cosponsors and S. 473 has 1 cosponsor.
- ***H.R. 1154/S. 1394, the “Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act,”*** would guarantee the right of public employees to bargain collectively with their employers over hours, wages, and conditions of employment and would mandate that State laws provide minimum collective bargaining rights to their public safety employees while prohibiting strikes and lockouts. States with collective bargaining laws already on the books would be exempt from the Federal statute. As of this writing, H.R. 1154 has a total of 128 cosponsors and S. 1394 has a total of 18 cosponsors.

NATIONAL FOP POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)

National Fraternal Order of Police’s (NFOP) Political Action Committee (PAC) raises and spends money to help elect Federal candidates who support law enforcement and the agenda of the FOP. The purpose is to promote the FOP’s legislative priorities while strengthening the FOP’s legislative program.

The internal goal of the NFOP PAC is to grow recurring monthly credit card and payroll deduction contributions from State and local lodges. By raising awareness within the FOP’s 348,000 membership about the importance of the NFOP PAC, we continuously seek to attract to increase membership participation. In doing so, we will be able to increase the NFOP PAC presence on Capitol Hill; highlighting the FOP’s legislative agenda and using it to leverage members to support our agenda.

As the late President of the FOP once said, your safety, your job security and the well-being of your family will be affected by the decisions made in Washington. Therefore, it is critical that you and your members take part in shaping the future.

In addition to payroll deductions, you can contribute to the NFOP PAC by making a check out to “NFOP PAC” or to set up monthly recurring contributions, please see PAC Director, Scott Marks to fill out the contribution form.

FOP CONTACT INFORMATION

Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center

328 Massachusetts Ave NE

Washington, DC 20002

Phone: 202-547-8189; Fax: 202-547-8190

Jim Pasco, Executive Director, jpasco@fop.net

Tim Richardson, Senior Legislative Liaison, trichardson@fop.net

Scott Marks, PAC Director/Legislative Liaison, scott.marks@fop.net

Mark McDonald, Legislative Liaison, mmcdonald@fop.net

Facebook: [@NationalFraternalOrderOfPolice](https://www.facebook.com/NationalFraternalOrderOfPolice)

Twitter: [@GLFOP](https://twitter.com/GLFOP)