



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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GILBERT G. GALLEGOS
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April 12, 1999

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the more than 277,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I am writing to inform you of our strong opposition to the intent of H. Res. 124. While the F.O.P. opposes, in the strongest possible terms, racism and the excessive use of force by police officers, we will not support the vilification of our nation's law enforcement officers.

The simple fact is that the recent events in New York City and California do not speak to the small incidence of the use of force by police officers in the United States of America. These unfortunate situations are the exception, not the rule. In fact, in November 1997, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that one in five persons age 12 or older had a face-to-face contact with a police officer during 1996. Only one quarter of 1% of all persons this age alleged that police threatened or used force against them. Clearly, the media and those who profit from discord have overblown this issue and created a dangerous level of mistrust between our nation's police officers and the citizens they are sworn to protect and serve.

We must join together—America's citizens, legislators, and police officers—and stand firm in our support for the brave men and women who place their lives on the line every day in carrying out their sworn duties. We must resist the temptation to accept the misinformation as fact regarding the incidence of the excessive use of force, and ensure that steps are taken today to forever prevent these unfortunate events from recurring. We agree with the President and the Attorney General that more funding must be provided for police officer training. We should not let a few allegations of "police brutality" undermine the trust and support that has allowed our communities to experience a sharp decline in criminal activity.

On behalf of the membership of the Fraternal Order of Police, I request that you resist the pressure to bring this measure to the House floor. We should not let the desire of some Members to continue to publicize misinformation about the occurrences of the excessive use of force sully the reputations of those who have taken an oath to serve and protect the citizens of this great land. If I can be of any further assistance on this or any other issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gilbert G. Gallegos
National President