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CONGRESS ANSWERS FOP'S CALL: *Bill to Expand Hate Crimes Law for Police Introduced in the House*

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, welcomed news that Representative Kenneth R. Buck (R-CO) introduced legislation that would expand the existing Federal hate crimes law to include protections for law enforcement officers.

“Talking heads on television and inflammatory rhetoric on social media are inciting acts of hatred and violence toward our nation’s peace officers,” Canterbury said. “Our members are increasingly under fire by individuals motivated by nothing more than a desire to kill or injure a cop. Enough is enough!”

Canterbury recounted numerous incidents in the past several days in which law enforcement officers were deliberately targeted for death or injury:

- Last June, a gunman armed with assault weapons and explosives used an armored car to get close to the headquarters of the Dallas Police Department and opened fire in an effort to kill law enforcement officers.
- Officer Thomas W. Cottrell, Jr. of the Danville Police Department in Ohio was shot and killed in an ambush attack by a man who told his ex-girlfriend that he intended to kill a law enforcement officer.
- Officer Douglas S. Barney of the Unified Police Department of Greater Salt Lake in Utah was responding to the scene of a car crash when one of the drivers, a man with an extensive criminal background and active Federal and State warrants, shot and killed him. The shooter wounded another officer before being killed by responding officers.
- Officer Jason Moszer of the Fargo Police Department in North Dakota responded to a domestic violence disturbance call. A man, armed with multiple long guns, called dispatchers after barricading himself inside of his home and told them he was going to shoot at officers. He shot and killed Officer Moszer from his barricade.

The last two and a half months of 2015 saw 46 officers shot in the line of duty and 16 of those lost their lives. This year, 61 law enforcement officers have been shot and 13 of which were killed.

— BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION —

“It is not just talk; it is not just rhetoric,” Canterbury stated. “Those spewing this hatred and those calling for violence are having an impact. They have been given a platform by the media to convey the message that police officers are their enemy and it is time to attack that enemy. Social media accounts are full of hatred and calls to target and kill police officers. The vitriol, the hateful screeds and statements of those we are sworn to protect and defend, as well as public calls to kill and injure police officers, are horrifying. There is a very real and very deliberate campaign to terrorize our nation’s law enforcement officers.”

In October of last year the Department of Justice released their “Ambushes of Police” report that detailed the amount of ambush attacks on law enforcement officers from 1990-2013. In 2013, there were between 200-300 ambush attacks reported on law enforcement officers. The Executive Summary of the report states: “...the proportion of fatal attacks on officers attributable to ambushes increasing. Concerns about targeted violence against police are on the rise, while officers must not only be guardians of the public but also be prepared to respond to violence targeting them.”

“The FOP intends to continue work closely with Representative Buck to ensure this bill receives full consideration and ultimately passes on the House floor,” Canterbury said.

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