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VEST AND FLAG BILLS ON THEIR WAY TO THE PRESIDENT

FOP-backed Bills Clear House and Senate

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, knows that hard work pays off.

“The intense lobbying effort by the staff here in the National Office to build support for several bills has led to many FOP successes this week,” Canterbury said.

Last year, the Senate passed S. 125, the “Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act,” but the House was slow to act and the legislation languished in the committee. The FOP made the case for the bill, which is part of our Officer Safety agenda, to virtually every member of the subcommittee with jurisdiction and picked up the support of its Chairman, Representative F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-WI) and its Ranking Member, Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI) who helped us champion the bill before the full committee on the Judiciary. The bill was favorably reported without amendment by voice vote in late April and this week was passed by the full House under a suspension of the rules. The bill now goes to the President who is expected to sign it.

“A bill that has been supported by the FOP for nearly 20 years is also on the way to the President for his signature,” said Canterbury. The bill, H.R. 723, the “Fallen Heroes Flag Act,” passed the House in May 2015 by voice vote under the suspension of the rules but languished in the Senate Committee. The FOP enlisted the assistance of the Majority Leader, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) whose staff worked with ours to revise and introduce a Senate companion bill, S. 2755. This legislation was passed by unanimous consent in the Senate and transmitted to the House for further action. The bill was then passed this week by the House under a suspension of the rules without amendment.

The House also considered and passed by voice vote under the suspension of the rules two bills supported by the FOP. One of the bills, H.R. 2137, the “Federal Law Enforcement Self-Defense

— BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION —

and Protection Act,” which will ensure that Federal law enforcement officers remain able to ensure their own safety and the safety of their families during a covered furlough. The other bill, H.R. 3209, the “Recovering Missing Children Act,” will add missing children cases to the current list of circumstances in which the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may release tax information to law enforcement. “Missing children’s cases are complex and allowing law enforcement officers to have access to these critical documents could significantly increase the chances of locating the missing child and returning him or her to their home,” said Canterbury.

The Senate also passed S. 1352, the “Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act,” by unanimous consent this week. This legislation would eliminate the Expected Family Contribution in the Pell Grant eligibility formula, making these Federal school loans easier to obtain for the children of public safety officers who die in the line of duty. “While nothing can replace the loss of a loved one, this change to Federal law may help make college more affordable for our survivor families,” said Canterbury.

On Thursday, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary will take up S. 2840, the “Protecting Our Lives by Initiating COPS Expansion (POLICE) Act.” The bill would allow the Office of Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) to award grants to State, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to receive Active Shooter Response Training. “With attacks against law enforcement officers on the rise, there is a real need for this particular type of training. Our law enforcement officers deserve to be better prepared,” said Canterbury. We expect the bill to pass the Judiciary Committee this week and, given the broad bipartisan support the bill has, the FOP is optimistic that it will pass full session before summer.

We are also hoping that the Senate will consider H.R. 2137 and H.R. 3209 during this year’s National Police Week so that they can be sent out to the President for his signature.

“National Police Week is a week to honor law enforcement officers who gave the ultimate sacrifice and those law enforcement officers who put their lives in danger every single day to selflessly protect the lives of others,” Canterbury said. “We can never repay a life lost but we can show our thanks and appreciation by passing legislation that supports and protects our law enforcement officers and their families,” said Canterbury.

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