



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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Senate Judiciary Committee Passes Four FOP-Backed Bills: Major Investments in Law Enforcement Training, Recruitment, and Wellness

Washington, DC – Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, applauded today’s news that the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary favorably reported S. 2151, the “Strong Communities Act,” S. 3860, the “Invest to Protect Act,” S. 4003, the “Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act,” and S. 4007, the “Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act.” These bills, all of which the FOP supported strongly, will now be sent to the Senate floor for a vote.

The Senate Committee on the Judiciary advanced S. 2151, the “Strong Communities Act,” which would help build on the community-policing model by establishing a grant program for local law enforcement agencies to assist in recruiting officers in their own communities.

“Qualified agencies will use this program to pay for recruits to attend law enforcement training programs at no cost, provided that the recruit agrees to serve in an agency in their community for at least four years,” Yoes said. “This will help local agencies recruit candidates from their own backyard and reduce the financial burden on these recruits. More law enforcement officers will be recruited from their communities, which we believe will help create more effective officers and safer communities.”

The committee also favorably reported S. 3860, the “Invest to Protect Act.” This FOP-backed legislation would establish a grant program, administered by the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), that would be used for the training of officers from police departments and municipalities that employ less than 200 law enforcement officers.

“Law enforcement officers have faced many challenges and threats to their well-being that have created a dangerous environment for those sworn to protect the public. These challenges have ranged from violence against officers, an increase in violent rhetoric against them, lagging technology, recruitment and retention issues, and mental health concerns,” Yoes said. “We are proud of this bill which will provide aid to improve training but can also be used to address the ongoing retention crisis that so many smaller agencies are facing.”

Also reported favorably by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary was S. 4003, the “Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act.” This bill would provide \$70 million in annual grant funding from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) to State and local law enforcement agencies to train officers in de-escalation tactics and alternatives to the use of force.

“Law enforcement officers face numerous challenges when responding to threats against public safety, and not all of these threats are necessarily criminal in nature. Police are on the front lines and are often called to deal with individuals experiencing mental illness, substance abuse

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issues, or similar psychological impairments,” said Yoes. “The implementation of de-escalation techniques would have a tremendous positive impact on public safety and the relationship between the public and law enforcement officers.”

Lastly, the committee favorably reported S. 4007, the “Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act,” which directs the U.S. Department of Justice to develop a state-of-the-art treatment program for public safety officers experiencing acute stress disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This legislation seeks to develop programs at the Federal level that would be accessible to State and local public safety officers, including evidence-based trauma-informed care, peer support, counseling services, and family support.

“The FOP strongly believes that we need to recognize the cumulative and corrosive effects of the mental stress suffered by law enforcement and other public safety officers and do everything we can to get them the help they need,” Yoes said. “This legislation would help to expand the kinds of services and support available to officers and their families who are struggling with mental health issues.”

President Yoes finished by stating “On behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I applaud the Members of the committee for their swift action on these bills and look forward to working with them to get them passed by the full Senate.”

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Founded in 1915, the Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement organization in the United States, with more than 364,000 members. With national offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., the FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those who serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation. Please visit fop.net for more information.