NATIONAL
FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE ®

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PATRICK YOES
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30 April 2024

The Honorable James D. Jordan
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Representative Nadler,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to you and the Members of the Committee on the Judiciary in support of H.R. 3325, the "Recruit and Retain Act," and H.R. 354, the "LEOSA Reform Act." These bills are FOP priorities and will be marked up tomorrow.

There are many reasons why the profession of law enforcement is struggling to recruit new officers and retain veteran officers. Violence specifically targeting law enforcement officers, an overall decline in public service careers, and a perception that such service—especially in policing—is no longer appreciated or valued have all contributed to staff shortages in too many communities across our country. To address this issue, the FOP is calling on this committee to favorably report H.R. 3325, the "Recruit and Retain Act." The Senate companion bill, S. 546, passed the Senate by unanimous consent last July.

The legislation would expand the scope of the Hiring Program administered by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to allow these funds to be used to reduce application fees and other similar costs for job applicants. In addition, the bill would establish the Pipeline Partnership Program, which would provide grants to law enforcement agencies that partner with colleges and universities and offer programming for students such as work-based learning opportunities, mentoring, job shadowing, apprenticeships, or skills-based internships in the profession of law enforcement. The bill would also fund a comprehensive study on attrition and recruitment in law enforcement in Federal, State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies. While no one piece of legislation can solve the officer recruitment and retention crisis, this is certainly a step in the right direction, and we urge the Members of the Committee to support it.

The "LEOSA Reform Act" would clarify the existing Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act, which exempts qualified active and retired officers from State and local prohibitions on

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the carriage of firearms. The bill makes clear that qualified active and retired officers may carry in the same venues as civilian concealed carry permit holders. The bill also extends the exemption to magazine capacity and would allow qualified active and retired law enforcement officers to access services in U.S. Post Offices, Social Security Administration offices, Veterans Affairs offices, and other Federal facilities without disarming or securing their firearms elsewhere. This would eliminate conflict and confusion and close existing loopholes to prevent any officer from inadvertently putting themselves in legal jeopardy by amending the existing statute (18 USC 926B and 926C). ***To be clear, this legislation would not increase the number of officers who are eligible to carry firearms under current Federal law.***

On behalf of the more than 373,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank you both for your leadership and continued partnership on law enforcement and criminal justice issues. The FOP strongly supports H.R. 3325, the "Recruit and Retain Act," and H.R. 354, the "LEOSA Reform Act," and we urge the Committee on the Judiciary to favorably report these bills. If I can provide any additional information about these measures, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: Gary Wolske, President, Ohio State Lodge
      Greg Toyeas, National Trustee, Ohio State Lodge
      Michael Essig, President, New York State Lodge
      Joseph Battaglia, National Trustee, New York State Lodge