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FOP



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THE FOP JOURNAL is published monthly by the Grand Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police, 701 Marriott Drive, Nashville, TN 37214 - 1-800-451-2711. Presort Non-Profit Standard, U.S. Postage Paid in Bolingbrook, IL, Permit No 1309. FOP membership includes a subscription to THE FOP JOURNAL. Subscriptions accepted from recognized law enforcement agencies, government officials and libraries. Non-member subscriptions \$32 a year; single copies \$8.

Media information available upon request by writing or calling National Headquarters. No part of THE FOP JOURNAL may be reprinted without written permission. Publication of any product does not endorse product or service by the National FOP.

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Soldiers of Honor

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Attending the 41st annual Fraternal Order of Police National Peace Officers' Memorial Service in Washington, D.C., was an emotional event. Our communities, large and small, experienced two of the most challenging years in recent history that tested our noble profession to its core. As I stood on the stage, gazing across the more than 4,000 white chairs filled with surviving families, I was in absolute awe of the honor, reverence and sacrifice of such devotion and love.

Surrounding them on three sides were tens of thousands of police officers in dress uniform, standing at attention to honor the 563 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of others. In that instant, in just one scene, I saw the sadness of what is wrong with society today and, at the same time, all that is right.

This event was no minor undertaking; it required a small army of dedicated volunteers and supporters to pull off what has become the cornerstone event of National Police Week.

As proud FOP members, it is paramount that we understand the

origins of Peace Officers' Memorial Day. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy recognized the need for a day of remembrance for fallen LEOs and signed a proclamation designating May 15 as Peace Officers' Memorial Day. This date has considerable significance for FOP members.

On May 14, 1915, much to the chagrin of their police chief, the first FOP meeting took place when brave Pittsburgh police officers dared to gather to discuss their deplorable working conditions. The very next day, Pittsburgh Mayor Joe Armstrong officially recognized the FOP and ordered the outraged police chief to stand down. This allowed officers to bring their concerns to the city council, thus giving the officers a united voice for the very first time. On that date, May 15, 1915, the Fraternal Order of Police was born, and it remains a proud tradition that flourishes 107 years later.

Is President Kennedy's declaration of May 15 as official Peace Officers' Memorial Day a coincidence? Hardly. The FOP has been a driving force in law enforcement advocacy since 1915.

The very first National Peace Officers' Memorial Service took place in 1982, as the FOP held our inaugural gathering in Senate Park. In attendance were approximately 120 survivors and supporters of law enforcement. That day, a Boy Scout troop on a field trip to the Capitol doubled the attendance when they saw the gathering and joined in.

I have tremendous admiration for four decades of selfless volunteers who contributed to the evolution of the Fraternal Order of Police Peace Officers' Memorial Service, but this message is about the FOP "Soldiers of Honor" who left me speechless during this year's event ... the unsung honor warriors who gave tirelessly of themselves in orchestrating the largest FOP Memorial Service ever.

Their attention to every detail was nothing short of amazing. To put it in perspective, their task was to synchronize the survivors seated in those white chairs this year — a 4,000-plus-piece puzzle that had to be

Continued on page 14 >



Support the NFOP PAC!

We need your support of the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC), which, like our grassroots activism, is an essential part of our National Legislative Program. The NFOP PAC allows us to support candidates who support our members and our profession. As the oldest and largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, it is crucial we keep our PAC strong, so we can help the candidates who not only support our members but the entire law enforcement community. It is up to us to ensure that they get elected!

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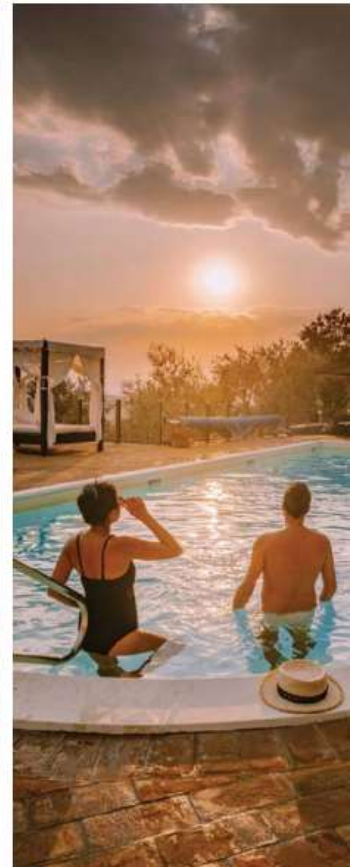


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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 12 >

assembled in a precise order and then dismantled in that same precise order.

With the precision of a finely tuned, well-oiled machine, each family boarded one of 51 buses that were escorted to the Capitol by what seemed like miles of motorcycle officers. As they made their way to their seats, thousands of uniformed officers stood side by side, creating a cordon of honor leading them to specifically assigned white chairs. At the appropriate time, all 4,000-plus walked to the stage, placed a flower in honor of their loved one and were escorted to one of six tables where FOP leaders presented them with an engraved medal bearing their loved one's name.

Impressive, I know ... but there's more: Changes in this year's process allowed more time spent with each family to talk about their loved ones, making it more meaningful. The entire service took the same amount of time needed for previous services that were a third of the size.

I am in complete amazement at the dedication and tireless efforts of so many who gave their all to ensure that no surviving family walks alone. While it is impossible to name them all, I would like to recognize Auxiliary President Glenda Manning Lehmann and Auxiliary Memorial Committee Chair Julie Litzelman Black, as well as NFOP Memorial Committee Co-Chairs Andy Maybo and Matt Hagan, who headed up the A-Team this year.

To all "Soldiers of Honor," job well done! **Thank you all! FOP**

FOP's Jim Pasco Named One of the Most Influential People in D.C.!

Earlier this month, the *Washingtonian* magazine released its annual list of the most influential people in Washington, D.C., for 2022. We are proud to announce that this immense honor has been bestowed upon our very own Jim Pasco!



Given that he has long been recognized for his passionate advocacy on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police, this most recent honor probably comes as no surprise to those who know him. The FOP is proud of Jim — and always grateful for his loyal service as a tough and tenacious voice for our membership. We congratulate him for achieving this prestigious recognition as one of *Washingtonian's* most influential people for 2022. The FOP is glad to have you as our voice in D.C.! To view the full "Washington DC's 500 Most Influential People" list, visit www.washingtonian.com/2022/05/03/washington-dcs-500-most-influential-people. **FOP**

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The Unsung Champions

// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Jimmy Holderfield at (904) 813-0067, or jholderfield@fop.net.

Greetings, brothers and sisters. I hope this June edition of the *Journal* finds you and your family well. It has been a busy couple of months for all of us, but especially for your Executive Board and the Board of Trustees. Our travels have been far-reaching in representing our members.

Let me start by giving our prayers to the families of Uvalde, Texas. Such a senseless act of violence by a deranged individual on our children. God bless our brother, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agent who put his life in jeopardy and neutralized this massacre.

This month's *Journal* will memorialize the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, held on May 15 on the lawn of our nation's Capitol, through the various photos taken by several of our members in attendance. Over 536 brothers and sisters and their families were honored at this memorial. A special thanks goes to our National Auxiliary, led by President Glenda Lehmann and the Auxiliary Board, and our National FOP Memorial Committee, led by Andy Maybo, Matt Hagen, Joe Hamer and Ruben Marichalar, for leading and coordinating the largest memorial service in history. This was truly a solemn event in celebrating these heroes' lives.

The focus of my message in this month's article is the unsung champions of this event. Not everyone can travel to Washington, D.C., to pay tribute and honors to our fallen and their families, but there are those among us who step up and memorialize the services for other to witness. Three of these, most notably, are Florida National Trustee David Stevens, Idaho National Trustee Brad Landes and Video Production Committee member Travis Brower (Utah).

During the weeklong event, these brothers were seen taking photos and videos of our members and surviving families — registering for training sessions, attending the Candlelight Vigil, visiting the Memorial Wall, participating in the various endurance events and attending the National Memorial Service. Very seldom

will you see a photo of one of them, but they are there. They are recording the memories of this special ceremony for the rest of us to reminisce.

My focus is on my dear friend, Brother David Stevens. David and I have been friends for over 40 years. He and I started at the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office at the same time and rose through the ranks together. He was the best man at my wedding to Pam. He served my lodge as president, and he and I continue to serve together on our local FOP Foundation Board. There is no one who is more FOP than David Stevens.

As we were setting up the program for the National Memorial Service, we realized that we needed a photographer to capture the images of the event. Without hesitation, Brother David Stevens volunteered. It must be noted that David is a professional photographer. Many of the photographs we enjoy viewing in the monthly *Journal* and on other media outlets are attributed to him. At his own expense, David traveled to Washington, D.C., attended the various events and captured the images of this most important program.

During the Memorial Service, David was busy taking photos of his fellow trustees who were bestowing the FOP Medals of Honor on the surviving family members. He skillfully maneuvered between the six tables that accommodated the beautiful mahogany boxes that held the medals. As one particular name was called, David handed me his camera and said, "Hold this ... I have to do this honor." Walking somberly toward Table #2 was a widow holding the hand of her young son. I noticed a tear on David's cheek as he knelt to hug the child. David presented the medal to the widow and gave her words of comfort.



As the young woman and child walked away, David wiped his eyes, took back his camera and resumed his duty of capturing memories. This is the typical David Stevens that I know and love. This is our brother.

In this issue, along with this month's edition of *American Police Beat*, you can see or remember the various tributes made to our fallen sisters and brothers and their surviving families. We can all thank Brothers Brad, Travis and David for their commitment to the Order. Without them, the memories might not have been recorded.

God bless you all, and I look forward to speaking to you or seeing you at the next meeting. Stay safe. **FOP**

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Last week, many of us converged on America's capital, Washington, D.C., to honor all of the brave men and women who have given their lives in the service of their communities. As in years before, this week was filled with powerful ceremonies to honor their sacrifice, somber moments of remembrance and opportunities to celebrate the memories we once shared with our fallen heroes. As I reflect on the events, I am amazed by the dedication and commitment of the many volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure the gears of the Police Week machine are always turning. The efforts of every single volunteer are to be commended. They are the reason we can stand with our surviving families at the annual Peace Officers' Memorial Service as we give our brothers and sisters the honors due to them.

Let's all be honest: we would not even be able to cobble together

a semblance of our annual service if not for the amazing members of our Auxiliary. Their dedication and commitment are second to none. This year, however, I was especially touched as I witnessed the efforts of two volunteers with our Auxiliary. As I watched them, I was quickly reminded how strong the family members who stand behind each of us, as we don the uniform and pin the badge on our chest before leaving home for every shift, can be. I was reminded that law enforcement officers never stand alone. Behind every single one of us is a small army of people at home who love us and care about us, yet because of their love for the community we serve, our families support us as we go out into the unknown to protect the world as we know it.

As I watched these two Auxiliary members, I gave myself a moment of

pause to consider the strength of my own family, as I am constantly amazed by the resiliency in their ability to give and sacrifice for our profession. Even that did not hold a candle to the commitment and dedication I witnessed. You see, these family members were first-year survivors. Last year, they gave to our profession, and our organization, immeasurably. They lost so much, yet in that sacrifice, they continued in their work to ensure that others would experience an honorable service. I was completely amazed because, in the midst of their chaos, they worked to bring order to the lives of others. I cannot think of a more honorable tribute than this — the continuation of a servant's heart — to a fallen hero. Let us always remember this level of dedication and commitment and strive to resemble it as we ensure that our surviving families never walk alone! **FOP**

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Recurring Issues Affecting Law Enforcement Nationwide



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As I approach serving on the Board of the National Fraternal Order of Police for a full year, I am not surprised that issues occurring here in Philadelphia are quite the same as those in other big cities across the nation. Recruitment is the biggest problem I have seen in my travels, and that, combined with the high officer resignations and retirements, creates a dangerous mix. Public safety and officer safety are at their highest risks due to dangerous manpower levels, and it does not appear to be easing anytime soon. Most of the cities, including Philadelphia, are headed by progressive mayors or city managers who know little to nothing about crime or law enforcement. In addition, these cities also have progressive prosecutors who view the police as the problem. Here in Philadelphia, our prosecutor is a lifelong defense attorney who actually sued the police department over 75 times prior to running for election. Those

two factors are in place across the nation and funding to get them elected came from a similar source, George Soros. These things are concerted efforts and they are not only occurring nationally, but also worldwide. We need to get on track and let the voters be aware, wherever you may be, that an outsider is affecting the policies and safety of your neighborhoods. We need to focus on this and reverse this trend.

In my national travels, I have been fortunate to meet with other local FOP executives and members, and this experience has been invaluable. The same issues are being faced in rural areas, much the same as in large metropolitan areas. There is gang activity everywhere you find drugs, and where you find both of them, you will also find illegal immigrants who brought their "home" gangs into the United States and are thriving extensions of the cartels of South

America. These folks are dangerous and need to be dealt with immediately or they will continue to grow and flourish.

On the home front, here in Philly we recently got a taste of the upcoming summer with a 95-plus-degree Saturday and Sunday as a preview of what is to come. I am also sure that manpower and its related problems will continue to be a problem in every assignment. Be sure that you take every single day of vacation time that is coming to you, even if you stay home. Everyone needs a few days off to recharge the batteries. As for when you are working, be safe out there and back each other up. I know that on some days and nights during the vacation season, your backup could be coming from a distance. You need to remember that and employ every trick you can think of to ensure your safety and that of the cars and wagons that are working your shift. Be safe! **FOP**

State Lodge Leadership to Change

JIMMY HOLDERFIELD / NATIONAL SECRETARY

Four great and accomplished State Lodge presidents have announced their retirements, effective at the conclusion of their respective upcoming State Conferences in June and August. Combined, they have over 60 years of service as the chief executive officers of their State Lodges. Each has also held or continues to hold a position on the National Board of Trustees.

West Virginia State Lodge President Stephen Walker (front left in photo) has served as president for 18 years and is the current West Virginia National trustee. California State Lodge President Roger Mayberry (front



right) has served as president for 22 years, served as the National sergeant at arms and is the current National director of Labor Services. Florida State Lodge President Robert "Bobby" Jenkins (back left) has served for six years and is the past Florida National trustee. Pennsylvania State Lodge President Les Neri (back right) has served for 14 years and is the past National FOP second vice president.

On behalf of the National Fraternal Order of Police Executive Board, the National Board of Trustees and the 360,000 members of the Order, we commend you for your service, thank you for your leadership and wish you well on your new endeavors. **FOP**

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global.rowan.edu



The Final Inspection

// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Keith Turnery at kturney@fop.org.

Every month, I contemplate what to write for our *Journal*. There is always some national event or trend that I can comment on, so it's usually pretty easy. As I was contemplating this article, on the heels of attending the 41st annual National Police Officers' Memorial Service in Washington, D.C., you can imagine what was running through my mind. Soon I would be seeing thousands of grieving friends and families at the memorial events. Soon I would experience the flood of emotions and memories of colleagues I've lost over the years. Soon I would be presenting medals to the families of the fallen. Soon I would be exhausted, physically and emotionally.

As I contemplated what to write this month, I recalled a poem I have had on many an office wall over the years, titled "The Last Inspection." Every time I read it, I have an emotional response, because it is as true today as it was when I first found it. The date of its origin, or who authored it, is unknown to me. However, I was contemplating that perhaps it could be the subject of my *Journal* article — or perhaps not, as there are a great deal of things I could write about. I left for D.C. and, of course, got really busy. As I stood on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol on May 15 at our annual Memorial Service, just after President Biden spoke, Storme Warren, an American TV and radio broadcaster, read "The Final Inspection." I have never heard it read at such a solemn public event. As a matter of fact, I have never heard it read aloud before. As you can imagine, it seemed to be a sign that it should be repeated here. So, my dear sisters and brothers, I present to you "The Final Inspection." Author unknown, but I'm sure he was a cop...

God bless you all, and God bless the FOP. **FOP**

The Final Inspection

The policeman stood and faced his God,
which always must come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining, just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, policeman, how shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To my church have you been true?"

The policeman squared his shoulders and
said, "No Lord, I guess I ain't,
Because those of us who carry badges can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays and at times my talk was rough,
and sometimes I've been violent,
because the streets are awfully tough.

But I never took a penny that wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime when
the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,
though at times I shook with fear.
And sometimes, God forgive me, I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place among the people here.
They never wanted me around, except to calm their fear.
If you've got a place for me here, Lord, it needn't be so grand,
But if you don't ... I'll understand."

There was a silence all around the throne
where saints had often trod
As the policeman waited quietly for the judgment of his God.

"Step forward now, policeman, you've borne your burdens well.
Come walk a beat on heaven's streets,
you've done your time in hell."

NEW NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE RECRUITMENT BROCHURE

The National FOP Recruitment Committee has designed a new recruitment brochure to aid State and local lodges and individual members in recruiting new members into the FOP. This beautiful color brochure contains various QR codes that let the reader see the FOP website, the history of the FOP, the

Legal Defense Plan, the free college program and much, much more. It also contains a pocket for a membership application, business card or other information to be inserted.

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The number one voice of law enforcement

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It's better to have it and not need it, than to not have it and need it.

OFFICER WELLNESS
Leading efforts to ensure the well-being of law enforcement officers

FOP FREE COLLEGE
Up to a bachelor's degree members and their families saving millions of dollars every year.

The brochures are sold in lots of 100 for only \$20 with free ground shipping.



Lodges can order this wonderful recruitment tool by contacting the National Secretary's Office via Stephanie Simpson at ssimpson@fop.net.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Stephen Walker

JIMMY HOLDERFIELD / NATIONAL SECRETARY
STEPHEN WALKER / WEST VIRGINIA STATE
LODGE PRESIDENT

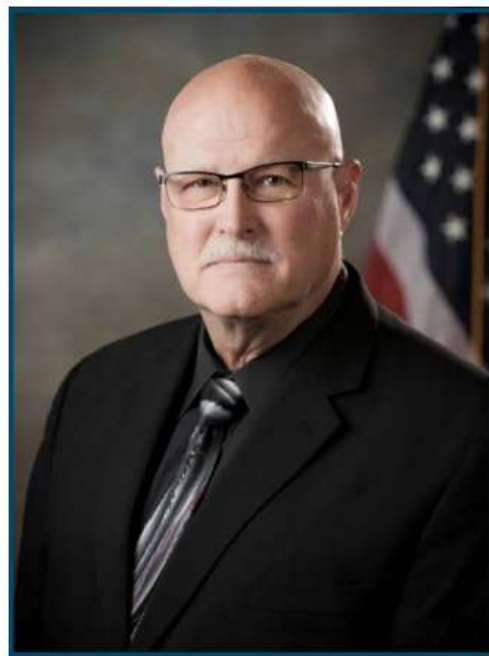
This month's featured member hails from the Mountain State, West Virginia. President Stephen Walker has presided over the West Virginia State Lodge since 2004 and has also served in the dual role of National trustee for the past eight years. He will assume the position of immediate past State president on June 15 at the conclusion of the 50th Biennial Conference of the West Virginia State Lodge.

Brother Walker is a dynamic individual who is quick-witted and methodical in his thoughts, words and deeds. He is highly respected by other State presidents and National trustees, and is sought out for advice on complex issues by FOP leadership around the country. Above all, he is a trusted confidant and mentor.

We caught up with President Walker and asked him to share with the *Journal* his past accomplishments, what he is doing now and his vision for the future. Here is our Q&A.

What is your rank and department, and how many years have you been on the job?

I started my police career at St. Albans Police Department in 1978, then moved to Charleston Police Department, where I retired after 27 years at the rank of lieutenant. I stepped away from law enforcement for about three years, then went to work for my current employer in 2009, the Kanawha County Sheriff's Department, where I currently hold the rank of chief deputy. The Sheriff's Department has five chief deputies, one sworn and four civilian. I also served for two years as chief of police in Nitro, West Virginia. CPD was the largest municipal police department in the state (excluding the West Virginia State Police), with 180 sworn officers at the time I retired and about 30 civilian staff. The Kanawha County Sheriff's Department has a combined civilian and sworn staff of 200 employees.



When and why did you join the FOP?

I always wanted to be an FOP member. When I first started in law enforcement, you had to have one full year of service prior to joining. I left St. Albans P.D. after 11 months and two weeks for Charleston P.D., and they would not count my previous time, so it took me two years to become a member. I became a member of the FOP in 1980. I have been a member for 42 years, **wow**, and have enjoyed every minute of it.

When and how did you get involved in FOP leadership and what positions have you held?

I started out as my local lodge trustee for six years, then moved to treasurer of my local lodge, a position I held for 14 years. While local treasurer, I was elected State treasurer in 2000. In 2004, I was elected State president, and have held that position since. I am also the National trustee, a position I have held since 2014. I plan to continue in that role, if the West Virginia delegates so desire.

What are some of your favorite things about the offices you hold?

I am excited being in the dual role of State president as well as National



Continued on page 26 >



The FOP Store

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www.mybrandmall.com/fop

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 24 >

trustee. It gives me a unique perspective. I truly believe that the National By-Laws need changing, especially now. I have encouraged **one** meeting, combining both the National trustees' meeting and the State presidents' meeting. All the years I have been both, I can count maybe on one hand how effective it has been to have two separate meetings. Generally, the same members attend both anyway. It would be a cost-saving move, in my opinion.

What are your future plans or goals in the FOP?

Effective June 15, 2022, I will relinquish the State president position I have held since 2004 (18 years). I will step into the role of immediate past president, and then transition into the past president role after our 2024 State Conference. I will assist and support the State Lodge and National Lodge however those executive boards decide to utilize my knowledge and years of experience. I hope to be re-elected as the National trustee from West Virginia, a position I've held since 2014.

What accomplishments are you proudest of in your work of advancing the FOP?

Working as a team for the WV FOP and its members. I didn't do anything myself. There are so many: the growth of our lodges, the yearly work at our State Legislature (love/hate relationship), the support we (Executive Board) give to each lodge and community support. In West Virginia, we are fortunate that we don't have all the hate against law enforcement, like a lot of the bigger cities in other states.

Why do you think the FOP is important?

We are the **voice** of law enforcement across this great nation. People know who the FOP is. When we speak, people listen, from those in D.C. who make laws to the smallest departments across the USA. The FOP is a force!

What's your favorite thing about being involved with the FOP?

We have each other's backs. There are so many resources available in being



a FOP member, from labor resources to training, member benefits and officer wellness, just to name a few. Being a FOP member is only as limited as you, the member, want it to be. You get out of the FOP what you put in!

What's your "secret to success"—what helps you be effective and what keeps you motivated?

My success has been the Executive Board and State trustees who work together to achieve our goals. The current Executive Board has a combined 208 years of experience. The least is four years, and the most is 31 years! If not for them, West Virginia State Lodge would not be where we are today. When I first came on the E- Board as the treasurer (2000), we were \$50,000 in debt. Through sensible management, we are much better off today. So, I owe the success to the Executive Board who have stood with me

all these years. I feel like a conductor of an orchestra — I'm only the "director"; the E-Board and State trustees do the work.

What advice would you offer FOP members who are thinking about getting more involved in their lodges?

Jump in; we are always looking for members to step up. We need members to be more involved. The more members are involved, the better this organization will become.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell your fellow members?

It's been a true honor to represent the West Virginia State Lodge all these years as their president! I hope to continue as the National trustee for a couple more terms, but who knows. I'll always be around to lend my experience and knowledge. Godspeed, and watch your six. **FOP**



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GEORGIA

Fulton County Lodge Member Honored for Contributions to Easter Seals

CARLTON STALLINGS / GEORGIA NATIONAL TRUSTEE

On May 19, Easter Seals of North Georgia had a reception where they recognized and renamed the Sylvan Hills Center Lobby (1757 Melrose Dr. SW, Atlanta, Georgia) in honor of

Brother Howard Billingslea for all his support and determination. He was presented with a musical performance from the Easter Seals children, along with several gifts and pictures drawn and made by the children. Brother Billingslea was supported by Fulton County Lodge #64 members: President Charlene

Heard, Sister Adrienne Grooms, Brother Ronnie Wyatt and Sister Andrea Thomas. Also present were State Chaplain Donald McDuffie and Dekalb Lodge President Jeff Wiggs. In addition, Brother Billingslea was honored with a special guest appearance by State Senator Donzella James. **FOP**





WANT A PRINTED COPY OF AN ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN *FOP JOURNAL*?

Perhaps you or your lodge were featured in the magazine and you'd like a keepsake to share or display?



Contact 911MEDIA for more information on ordering a reprint: production@911media.com.

NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS' MEMORIAL SERVICE



Thousands of law enforcement officers, survivors and supporters gathered at the West Front of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., on May 15 for the FOP's 41st annual National Peace

Officers' Memorial Service, honoring the 563 brave men and women of law enforcement who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty in 2021. Their legacy will never be forgotten, and their families will never walk alone. **FOP**



Photos by Brad Landels and David Stevens











| WELLNESS |



Addressing Critical Issues With Information

SHERRI MARTIN / DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS

In your work as a law enforcement officer, what most affects you right now?

With all of the various issues our profession has collectively faced over the past couple years, from the COVID-19 pandemic to increasing assaults on police and calls for defunding, the National Fraternal Order of Police wants to know which issues are viewed by our members as most critical at this time so that we can focus our efforts on those that are the most concerning. As we developed the 2021 FOP Biennial Critical Issues in Policing Survey, we wanted to gather information about not only officer wellness, but also other issues that are affecting our profession, so that we could be effective at serving members in all of our efforts. In doing so, we polled the leaders of our national committees, asking how we could inform their respective missions as we all strive together to provide support that **works for you**.

It came as no surprise to us that the potential removal of the protections of qualified immunity was the top concern among respondents to the survey. This idea, brought about in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd, gained some traction, and officers in some states did in fact suffer the removal of these protections. Violent crime was viewed as the second most critical incident facing law enforcement right now. Nearly every day in the news, we see evidence

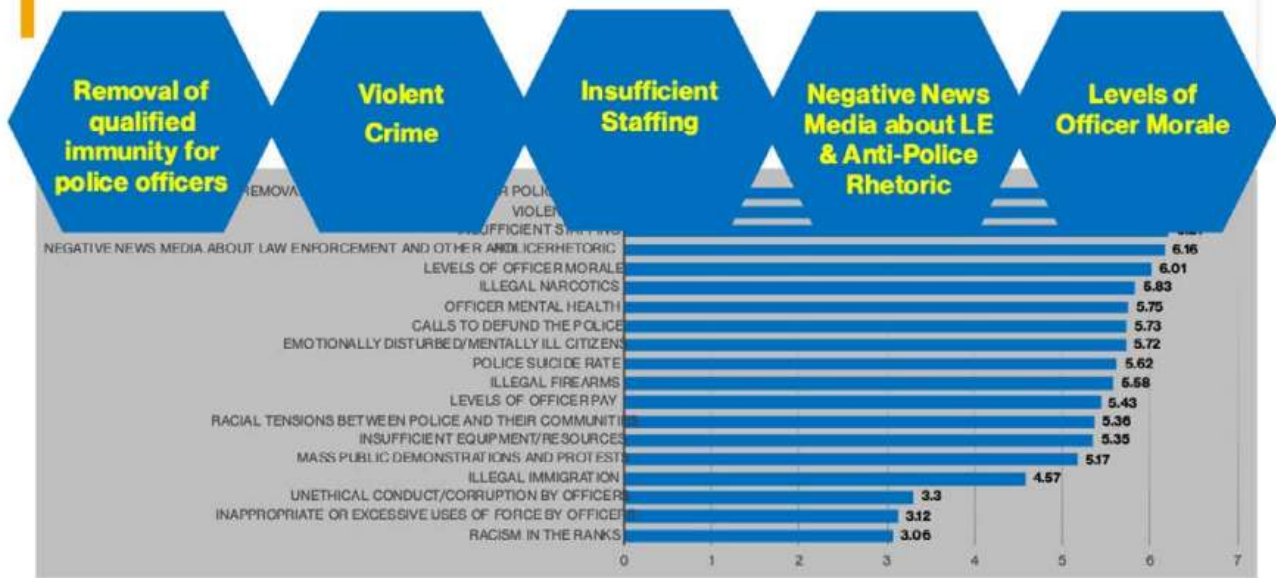
of the uptick in violent crime in the United States, and we know that our national FOP leadership is on point and leading the way in sounding the alarm. The third most critical issue as rated by survey respondents is insufficient staffing in their police agencies. As we work to battle violent crime in our streets, we know that issues with recruitment and retention make our jobs that much more challenging when we do not have adequate staffing levels to fight back.

For Each of the Issues Listed Below, Please Rate How Serious You Believe That Each One Is for Law Enforcement Right Now?

In our survey, respondents were asked to rate each issue on a scale from “not an issue at all” (indicated by a ranking of “1”) to “a very serious issue” (indicated by a rating of “7”). The graph on the next page depicts ratings of the seriousness of each issue, with the top five highlighted. We realize that each officer’s experiences are unique to the individual, but this aggregate data from over 5,300 officers across the nation provides us with insight into the most pressing concerns.

Brother Steve James, chairman of the National FOP Legal Defense Plan Board, had heard the voices of officers making claims to the FOP Legal Defense Plan and asked us to gather data to measure their concerns. Based on the survey, we learned of the toll that these critical issues have taken on our

Critical Issues in Policing



members. **Nearly all (96%) of survey respondents indicated that they had some level of concern that they could be criminally prosecuted for doing their job. What's more, nearly half (42%) reported being extremely worried!**

In examining officers' level of concern about being sued in civil court or being fired as a result of doing their job as a law enforcement officer, we saw similar trends. Eighty-five percent of survey respondents reported at least some concern about being sued civilly, with again nearly half (44%) expressing **extreme** worry. With regard to worry over being fired for doing their job as a police officer, 88% of respondents reported at least some level of concern.

Our survey received responses from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Guam, from officers at all ranks, working on all shifts and in various job assignments. However, when reviewing the data regarding these concerns, worries about being criminally prosecuted, sued civilly or fired showed little variation between regions. These concerns were shared by officers in every region of our country, which has also been reflected in increased participation in the FOP Legal Defense Plan as members actively respond to these

concerns. Only when comparing data related to agency size did we begin to see some variation. Our members in larger agencies expressed greater levels of concern in all three scenarios (criminal prosecution, civil suit and termination), with officers working in police agencies that employ over 1,000 officers experiencing the most concern. It should be noted that we did see some regional variations in concern over removal of qualified immunity, with those in the Northwest and the Northeast sharing the greatest worry.

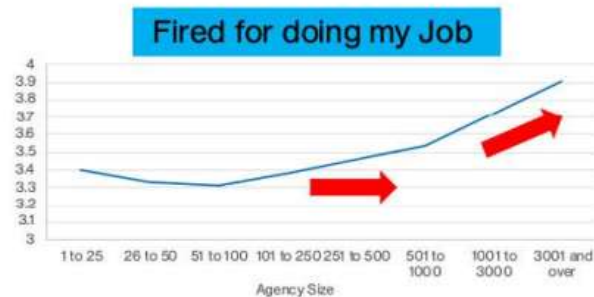
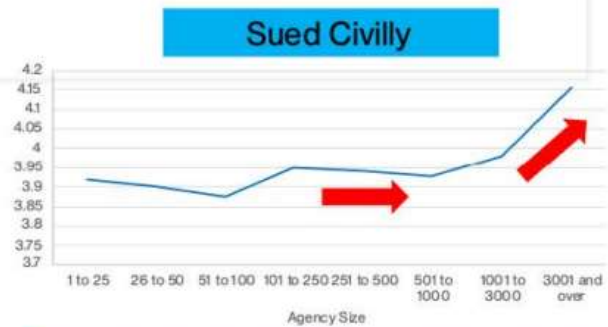
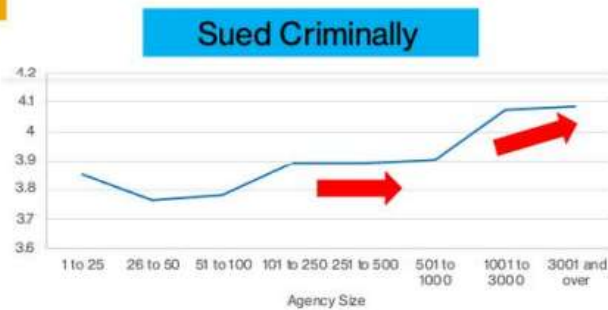
The FOP Division of Wellness Services, in our work to develop services and wellness programming for members and their families, knows how critical it is that resources be utilized in the most efficient and effective manner. For that reason, we almost always fall back on the collective voices of our membership to drive our efforts. In doing so, we recognize that within our collective voice are hundreds of thousands of individual voices who may all have unique experiences.

With 43 national committees focused on all areas of advocating for law enforcement officers, the National Fraternal Order of Police takes a multifaceted look at improving the lives and working conditions of our nation's heroes. We have already begun to act on the data gathered in the 2021 FOP Critical Issues in Policing Survey. Aside from sharing the results of this survey at law enforcement conferences, our national leaders are sharing our collective voices in the media and on all our social media channels. In March, the first significant findings of the survey were shared with attendees of the International Association of Chiefs of Police Officer Safety & Wellness Symposium. In addition, we are sharing this information with our government leaders across the United States and around the world.



Continued on page 38 >

Current Environment – Worries and Concerns – By Agency Size



The bigger the agency; the more concerned

We see an uptick in concerns when agencies get to 101 personnel to 1000. Then another uptick at 1001 and larger.

LET YOUR VOICE
BE HEARD!

The FOP constantly endeavors to hear about the experiences of our members, so that we can understand how best to serve you.

The FOP was selected to partner with the Department of Justice to build standardized training in law enforcement peer support. Share your thoughts with us on how this training can best help our profession at [surveymonkey.com/r/PowerInPeers](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PowerInPeers).

ADDRESSING CRITICAL ISSUES

Continued from page 37 >

In our series of *FOP Journal* articles that highlight the key findings of our 2021 FOP Biennial Critical Issues in Policing Survey, we must remain mindful of how all of the information together helps paint a picture of what our officers are experiencing across the nation. With fears over removal of qualified immunity and other protections for law enforcement officers as they strive to serve their communities, we recognize that the results of the loss of these protections are likely to be increased retirements, recruitment challenges and shorter staffing, which we already know from our research is the number one stressor for our members. If we aim to preserve and increase officer wellness, to reduce burnout and distress, we must start at the root causes of those issues, addressing staffing levels and protecting our officers' rights. Across the board, your National Fraternal Order of Police recognizes these facts and is fighting on your behalf, armed with data and information from the shared voices of our members through the 2021 FOP Biennial Critical Issues in Policing Survey. **FOP**

REFERENCE

Drew, J.M & Martin, S. *Preliminary Findings of the 2021 FOP Biennial Issues in Policing Survey*. Presentation to FOP Leadership Matters, February 5, 2022.



BENEFITS OF FOP MEMBERSHIP

The Fraternal Order of Police is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with over 325,000 members in more than 2,100 lodges. We are committed to improving the working conditions of officers and the safety of those we serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement and employee representation. Here's a quick overview of the wide variety of services and benefits that the FOP offers to its members.

Legislative Office

The office on Capitol Hill lobbies on issues important to rank-and-file law enforcement officers. The National Legislative Program is the most active and comprehensive of any law enforcement organization in Washington.

Legal Defense Plan

This self-funded plan is available to eligible FOP groups and individual members to cover law enforcement exposures, including administrative, civil and criminal legal coverage; H.R. 218 coverage; and the Moonlighting Liability Insurance Program.

Labor Services Division

Comprehensive resources and services designed to ensure that no officer goes to the bargaining table alone. Labor Services stands ready to provide the people and resources you need for contract information, experienced legal experts, training seminars, personalized labor research and more.

National Peace Officers' Memorial Service

This solemn event is held every year during National Police Week to honor those who have given their lives in the line of duty. Open to the public, it brings together the expanded law enforcement family and national leaders, pays tribute to the fallen and offers words of comfort to their surviving family members.

FOP Journal

Published digitally 12 times a year, the *FOP Journal* is the official publication of the Grand Lodge. Each issue contains reports from the Executive Board, updates on law enforcement legal and labor issues and so much more!

Disaster Relief

As part of the NFOP Foundation, the Fraternal Order of Police Disaster Relief Fund (a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization) relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations and is always prepared to assist our members in distress.

Charity Partnerships

- **Easter Seals:** Helping children and adults with disabilities live better lives is at the heart of Easter Seals' mission, and the FOP, as a long-standing Easter Seals National Corporate Partner, has helped raise more than \$15 million. Donate online at www.easterseals.com and be sure to indicate your FOP affiliation when donating!
- **Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics:** The FOP is committed to helping people with intellectual disabilities learn to become self-reliant and contributing members of our communities.

Service Providers

The National FOP list of Service Providers currently includes Liberty Mutual insurance, Avis and Enterprise car rentals and a variety of licensed products from HALO, the official FOP merchandiser.

Education Services

The Education Services Committee develops and implements professional law enforcement training programs and events to equip members with the skills needed to enhance their careers, and has established a training schedule covering a wide spectrum of leadership, labor and legal issues. The Grand Lodge also provides scholarships to eligible applicants.

National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU)

Recognizing that four-year and graduate degrees are increasingly important for law enforcement career advancement, the FOP collaborates with a select consortium of universities willing to offer members the education they need with a flexible schedule and reasonable cost. **FOP**



For more information on all of these programs, visit www.fop.net.

SOME LIFE EVENTS CAN BECOME HEAVY BURDENS — NOW IT'S EASIER THAN EVER TO GET HELP

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1. Visit MDLIVE.com/AetnaMedicarebh or download the MDLIVE app to your smartphone. Follow the prompts to create your account.
2. **Choose a provider in your state.** MDLIVE has a large network of board-certified psychiatrists and licensed therapists. You can choose to see the same

provider each time or choose to see someone else. Psychiatrists can even write and send prescriptions to your drug store.

3. **Choose an appointment time that works for you.** First appointments can be scheduled, on average, in seven days or less, including nights and weekends.

Current Aetna Medicare Advantage members can visit MDLIVE.com/AetnaMedicarebh to get started, or call **(888) 865-0729** (TTY: **1-800-770-5531**) to learn more. Our MDLIVE Call Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year.

If you or a loved one need immediate help, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support, prevention and crisis resources for people in distress. Call **(800) 273-8255**. **FOP**



Editor's Note: The FOP is dedicated to helping all of its members and their families thrive and improve their standard of living. That's why the FOP has teamed up with Aetna to offer four Aetna Medicare Advantage PPO plan options that provide members with comprehensive medical, prescription, hearing and vision benefits. As part of this partnership, Aetna will be sharing helpful information about its plans, wellness-related news and more in each issue of the *FOP Journal*.



FOP VETTED AND APPROVED WELLNESS PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMS

Wellness Facilities

Chateau Recovery

Midway, UT

chateaurecovery.com/programs/first-responders

FHE Health: Shatterproof Program

Deerfield Beach, FL

fherehab.com/services/first-responders

First Responder Wellness by Simple Recovery

Costa Mesa, CA

firstresponder-wellness.com

Harbor of Grace First Responder Program

Havre de Grace, MD

harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders

Transformations Treatment Center: Help for Our Heroes Program

Delray Beach, FL

helpforourheroes.com

Warrior's Heart

Bandera, TX

warriorsheart.com

Wellness Products

CordicoShield

cordico.com/shield

TIAG mResilience

tiag.net/innovations/mresilience

Lighthouse Health & Wellness

lighthousehw.org

Wellness Training Programs

HEART 9/11 SMART Program

heart911.org/programs/smart-program

Warrior PATHH

bouldercrest.org/warrior-pathh

NFOPU SPOTLIGHT

Union Institute & University



Union Institute & University (UIU) has been endorsed by the National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) since 2015, with the goal to provide quality higher education opportunities for law enforcement professionals, regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Why UIU Is the Best Choice for Your Criminal Justice/Emergency Services Management Degree

Union is the best choice for your Criminal Justice/Emergency Services Management degree because we have specialized in providing higher education degrees for working adults since 1964. We pioneered degrees in a delivery model that is the result of more than five decades of identifying and refining ways to structure and deliver education to meet the needs of adults — including flexible schedules, online courses, reasonable costs and credit given for your professional experience.

We understand the demanding work schedules of law enforcement professionals and your commitment to family and community. Yet, you want to get ahead in your career and know a degree may provide that opportunity and could move you up in the ranks, which may result in a pay increase. Union is proud to have graduated over 6,000 law enforcement professionals with a degree geared toward public safety. Many of these graduates have gone on to become police chiefs, captains, emergency managers and public service directors.

Real-World Experience Invited

The UIU Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice/Emergency Management degree was developed, led and taught by experts who know the field, not only because they've studied it, but because they've experienced it firsthand — as line employees, managers, supervisors, administrators and executives.



Your real-world experience in the field is invited. We know your work experience has taught you things that cannot be learned in a classroom. That is why our generous credit transfer policy recognizes your previous training and experience. By transferring up to 90 eligible credit hours, you could complete your degree in less than one year.

Law enforcement professionals may receive up to 34 semester credits for basic academy training. Additionally, you can receive credit for military service or other related department experience beyond the academy using Union's certified learning method, with a maximum of training hours not to exceed 60 credits.

Leadership Skills Expanded

Union's management degrees enhance problem-solving, managerial, leadership and analyzation skills. Courses taught in Ethics, Leadership, Contemporary Issues, and Technology align with Pillar Five: Training & Education under former President Barack Obama's President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

Here's why Chief of Police Sekou Millington values the leadership skills he obtained through his degree: "Education is extremely important as you pursue a career in law enforcement. Research has shown that among other things, a college education improves ethical decision-making skills, knowledge and understanding of the law and the courts, openness to diversity, and communication skills. An advanced degree shows that you have the ability to improve yourself and the willingness to put in the work to be the best you can be. Law enforcement is an ever-changing profession and we must be creative, innovative, and forward thinkers. Achieving your degree is an investment in **you**; it's an accomplishment that no one can ever take from you."

Affordable and Online

Union's new tuition rates of \$350 per credit hour make your degree more affordable than ever. There are no application fees and classes start every



Chief Sekou Millington

eight weeks. In addition, classes are 100% online, so you can attend part-time or full-time. Many veterans choose a law enforcement career to continue to serve their nation. We are proud to be a Yellow Ribbon university, recognized by the Department of Defense for our support of veterans.

Pursue an MBA

After completing your B.S., a graduate degree awaits you. An MBA with a specialization in Criminal Justice Management, Cyber Security or Organizational Leadership will deepen your knowledge of business, management and technology. Advanced instruction in these areas will enhance your skill set and make you even more marketable for a leadership position in public safety.

Union is distinguished as the pioneer in adult education. The concepts now common in higher education, such as flexible schedules, online courses, the blending of online and traditional classroom instruction known as the hybrid model, interdisciplinary studies, and student-centered education, are trademarks of Union Institute & University.

Now is the time to move up the ranks with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice/Emergency Services Management or with one of our graduate school offerings such as the MBA or MSOL (Master of Science in Organizational Leadership). Enroll today at <https://myunion.edu/academics/bachelors/criminal-justice-management>. **FOP**

The National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU) has successfully paved the way for hundreds of FOP members to pursue higher or continued education. For more information on the NFOPU Consortium, go to fopconnect.com/education-connect/about-the-consortium.



Los Angeles, CA



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House Passes Two FOP-Backed Bills



The U.S. House of Representatives considered and passed two pieces of legislation supported by the FOP: H.R. 2992, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Law Enforcement Training Act, and a bill that was largely developed by the FOP, H.R. 6943, the Public Safety Officer Support Act. Both bills will now be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were approximately 2.9 million traumatic brain injury-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations and deaths in the United States in 2014. Currently, between 3.2 million and 5.3 million people are living with a TBI-related disability in the U.S., and about 7–8% of Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives. The effects of TBI can be short-term or long-term and include impaired thinking, memory, movement, vision, hearing or emotional functioning, such as personality changes or depression. Officers responding to a call for service may not be able to identify when they are responding to individuals who suffer from TBI or similar injuries. The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Law Enforcement Training Act, which passed last month on a 400–21 vote, would direct the attorney general to develop crisis intervention training tools for use by law enforcement and other public safety officers when interacting with community members who have TBI, another form of acquired brain injury or PTSD. The bill will also collect information and compile a report on the scope of PTSD and TBI within the ranks of law enforcement in order to find better solutions and protocols to address this issue within our ranks.

The House also considered and passed a bill that the FOP invested a lot of time and energy into developing — H.R. 6943, the Public Safety Officer Support Act. This

Just the Facts:

>> The House of Representatives has passed two FOP-supported bills related to mental health. H.R. 2992 would direct the attorney general to develop crisis intervention training tools for use by law enforcement when interacting with community members who have acquired brain injuries or stress disorders, while H.R. 6943 recognizes the service-connected nature of stress disorders and establishes them as a presumption for PSOB death and disability benefits in cases of suicide or attempted suicide. Five FOP-backed bills were also considered by the Senate Committee on Judiciary during National Police Week, and other measures have seen progress as well.

bill, which was passed on a 402–17 vote, recognizes the service-connected nature of PTSD, acute stress disorder and other similar stress disorders that may lead an officer to attempt or commit suicide, and would expand the eligibility of certain officers or their surviving family members for the death and disability benefits provided by the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program.

The bill provides that an officer who is diagnosed with acute stress disorder, PTSD or another similar mental health condition who commits or attempts to commit suicide is presumed to “constitute personal injury” as defined in the PSOB statute. This would allow the officer or their surviving family to claim the death or disability benefit administered by the PSOB program.

H.R. 6943 also establishes a similar presumption that any officer “who has contacted or attempted to contact the employee assistance program of the agency or entity that the officer serves, a licensed medical or mental health professional, suicide prevention services, or another mental health assistance service in order to receive help, treatment, or diagnosis” is also eligible to make a PSOB death or disability claim.

Finally, the legislation recognizes the cumulative and corrosive effects of the mental stress suffered by law enforcement and other public safety officers. Just as an officer may

die from a gunshot wound years after being shot, some officers reach a point where they are overcome and consider suicide. To address this, the bill creates the same presumption for any public safety officer who is exposed to a mass casualty, mass death or mass shooting event. Responses to incidents like Sandy Hook, the Pulse nightclub and the Las Vegas shooting may not have an immediate impact on many officers whose training and mental resiliency allow them to respond to the crisis and, in many cases, cope with their trauma and continue to serve. But some officers — too many — are unable to cope. They may struggle in silence and not seek the help they need, developing unhealthy coping mechanisms like substance abuse that accelerate their downward emotional spiral until they reach that dark place and see suicide as a solution to their pain. We need to do everything we can to help these officers — indeed, we have a responsibility to do so. However, on those occasions in which we fail them, we absolutely cannot fail the families they leave behind, nor can we fail to help an officer who survives the attempt. They should be eligible to file a claim with the PSOB program, and this bill would make that possible.

The following representatives voted

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FOP JOURNAL // JUNE 2022

5 Great Reasons

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1

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¹Discounts provided for active, retired, surviving spouses of FOP members and their families including parents-in-law. ²40% off pricing as referenced in the Consumer Guide to Hearing Aids; details available on request. Discount varies depending on product. ³Rebates are valid only on product technology levels 3, 4, 5 and may not be used with any federal or state funded reimbursement programs. Rebates are not valid on returned hearing aids, please allow 60 days for receipt of the mail-in rebate. ⁴Trial period for hearing aids is 75 days. If you're not 100% satisfied, simply return your aids for a full refund. ⁵Approval based on credit.

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Top Priorities in Brief

H.R. 82/S. 1302, the Social Security Fairness Act

House: 274 co-sponsors (199 D, 75 R)

Senate: 39 co-sponsors (33 D, 4 R, 2 I)

Urge Congress to pass it:

<http://tinyurl.com/yc84zf3m>

H.R. 962/S. 1888, the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act

House: 98 co-sponsors (74 D, 24 R)

Senate: 4 co-sponsors (3 D, 1 R)

Urge Congress to pass it:

<http://tinyurl.com/37afz34h>

H.R. 3225, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act

House: 32 co-sponsors (22 D, 10 R)

Urge Congress to pass it:

<http://tinyurl.com/5h6mtmvt>

H.R. 1210/S. 1610, the LEOSA Reform Act

House: 58 co-sponsors (1 D, 57 R)

Senate: 2 co-sponsors (2 R)

Urge Congress to pass it:

<http://tinyurl.com/5e4m94rj>

H.R. 3079/S. 774, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 84 co-sponsors (6 D, 78 R)

Senate: 23 co-sponsors (23 R)

Urge Congress to pass it:

<http://tinyurl.com/mvursja>

To see a full list of legislation supported by the FOP, please visit tinyurl.com/ycy5k5rv. Members should continue to monitor the FOP's social media platforms and our website for the latest legislative news! To send a message to your members of Congress asking them to support FOP priority legislation, visit the FOP Action Center at votervoice.net/FOP/home.

WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 44 >

against H.R. 6943:

- Lauren O. Boebert (R-Colo.)
- Kenneth R. Buck (R-Colo.)
- Timothy F. Burchett (R-Tenn.)
- Andrew S. Clyde (R-Ga.)
- Ronald G. Estes (R-Kan.)
- Matthew L. Gaetz II (R-Fla.)
- Louis B. Gohmert, Jr. (R-Texas)
- Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.)
- Andrew P. Harris (R-Md.)
- Jody B. Hice (R-Ga.)
- G. Clay Higgins (R-La.)
- Thomas H. Massie (R-Ky.)
- Ralph W. Norman, Jr. (R-S.C.)
- Scott G. Perry (R-Pa.)
- Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr. (R-Mont.)
- C.E. "Chip" Roy (R-Texas)

The FOP is already fully engaged with our Senate partners on both of these bills and, as you will read below, the Senate companion to H.R. 6943 is already scheduled for consideration by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

FOP-Supported Bills Advance Through Senate Committee on Judiciary

The U.S. Senate Committee on Judiciary considered the following five FOP-supported bills during National Police Week last month:

- 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
- S. 3635, the Public Safety Officer Support Act, which is the companion bill to H.R. 6943, described above
- S. 3860, the Invest to Protect Act, which 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
- S. 4003, the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act, which 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

- S. 4007, the Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act of 2022, which would direct the DOJ to develop a state-of-the-art treatment program for public safety officers experiencing acute stress disorder or PTSD

The Committee favorably reported S. 2151, S. 3860 and S. 4007 by voice vote without amendment. We expect that the bills will be considered on the floor sometime this summer.

Finally, S. 3635 was held over until the next meeting of the Judiciary Committee. We believe it could be voted on before the end of the month.

Continuing Outreach on FOP-Backed Legislation

The FOP continues our advocacy for H.R. 3172/S. 2981, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act. This legislation would establish a home loan benefits program for law enforcement officers, other first responders and educators based on a similar program for veterans administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Federal Housing Administration Mortgage Insurance Program for eligible public employees would streamline eligibility, expand eligible areas, eliminate down payment requirements and eliminate a monthly insurance premium requirement. This will greatly expand the affordable housing options for law enforcement officers and their families. Last month, the FOP called on the House Committee on Financial Services and the Senate Committee on Banking to consider this bill and favorably report it to the floor. The Committee has not yet responded to the FOP's request.

Update: Social Security Fairness Act

We have added only six co-sponsors to H.R. 82 since April 1, bringing our current total to 274 — 16 shy of our goal of 290 co-sponsors. As our members know, if we do get 290 co-sponsors, it triggers a House rule, and the bill would go to the floor for consideration.

The FOP has been targeting members of the House who had previously cosponsored this measure and, of the more than 100 members on our initial list, we have six remaining:

Continued on page 48 >

FOP JOURNAL // JUNE 2022

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WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 46 >

- Georgia: Lucy K. McBath (D-6)
- Oklahoma: Kevin R. Herm (R-1)
- Texas:
 - Lance C. Gooden (R-5)
 - Elizabeth A. Fletcher (D-7)
 - J. Roger Williams (R-25)
 - Marc A. Veasey (D-33)

We urge all our members from these states to contact these representatives and ask that they once again cosponsor this top legislative priority.

We also continue our work with Representatives Davis, Spanberger and Garret N. Graves (R-La.) and the Public Safety Working Group on Social Security Fairness in an effort to reach our goal.

In the Senate, the bill was introduced as S. 1302 by Senators Sherrod D. Brown (D-Ohio) and Susan M. Collins (R-Maine). The bill has 39 co-sponsors — one more than we had at the end of the 116th Congress. We are engaging with the Senate Committee on Finance in an effort to get a hearing on the WEP/GPO issue.

Law Enforcement Equity Act — FOP Legislative Priority Update!

The FOP Government and Media Affairs Center has continued our outreach campaign for H.R. 962/S. 1888, the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act. This bill, which is a top legislative priority for FOP members, would expand the definition of "law enforcement officer" for retirement benefits to include all GS-0083 officers — which will benefit the nearly 30,000 federal law enforcement officers who are not currently eligible for this benefit. This would provide these officers with 6(c) retirement benefits and the ability to retire after 20 years of service at the age of 50, or after 25 years of service at any age.

As of this writing, we have 98 co-sponsors in the House! This is more than **three times** the cosponsorship total in the previous Congress, and the support is bipartisan. Our sustained campaign to build support for this measure is working, and we believe that if we can get to 100 or more co-sponsors, we can credibly seek committee action on the bill.

For additional information, please visit <https://fop.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/DOTH-LEO-Equity.pdf> for a detailed one-pager on the bill.

Help Spread the Word!

We encourage all FOP members to

check out our social media pages, as the daily posts inform not only our members on the current issues facing law enforcement, but the general public as well. With our social media outreach, we hope to better educate them on the current state of affairs for the brave men and women who suit up every day to serve and protect. We encourage every lodge, every member and every citizen who supports law enforcement officers to follow the National FOP on:

- Facebook (@GLFOP)
- Twitter (@GLFOP)
- Instagram (@FOPnational)

Do your part! We need your help to spread the truth and defend the police and our officers. We ask that everyone **share, comment** and **like** the content that we are posting.

Lastly, the National FOP's weekly update is a key resource to keep you informed on the legislation important to law enforcement and a great way to stay updated on what the National FOP is doing for you in Washington. If you have not yet done so, please be sure to sign up for the National FOP's *Washington Watch: Legislative Update*. This one-of-a-kind weekly update is sent out every Friday via email, posted in the NFOP mobile app and shared on our social media platforms. To sign up to receive the update via email, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/24aecm93>.

Please Support the PAC!

Our National Legislative Program is the most reliable, effective and impactful law enforcement advocacy operation in Washington, D.C. When Congress or an administration, regardless of party, is looking to engage meaningfully on criminal justice or law enforcement issues, they seek out the FOP as a partner. We are known and trusted to fight for the interests of our members, which makes the FOP a vital ally on policing and criminal justice issues.

As we move into this election year, the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC) is a critical component of our advocacy program. Supporting candidates who support our members and our profession can be a very effective way to represent our members on Capitol Hill. Given the importance of the PAC, it is vital that it is as well-funded as possible. However, as of this writing, our PAC is very much depleted from the previous election cycle. We need our members to step up and contribute to help us ensure

that the next Congress will continue to have members who will fight for them. One lodge in particular, the Long Beach Police Officers Association, raises over \$1,000 per month for the PAC. And this is just one lodge! If lodges nationwide were to follow their lead, the NFOP PAC would have the resources it needs to make a nationwide impact.

We are asking all FOP members to find a way to contribute to the National FOP PAC. Our profession depends on having well-informed lawmakers who listen and understand the challenges facing law enforcement today.

We can accept one-time donations, but we encourage members to sign up for recurring, monthly contributions using their credit card. This is the most effective and reliable way to contribute.

These contributions need not be for hundreds or thousands of dollars (though these are also very much appreciated) — every dollar helps! If every FOP member gave just \$1, we could raise \$364,000! If 10% of our members gave just \$5 this year, we would raise \$182,000 for the next election cycle. We can and need to do better raising funds for our PAC!

To donate online, please visit <https://nfop-pac.firstresponderprocessing.com>. If you would like to donate via check, please make it out to the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee and mail it to 328 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, D.C., 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for our recurring monthly credit card donations, please contact the Government and Media Affairs Center at (202) 547-8189 or David Taboh at dtaboh@fop.net.

Thank you to all of you who have supported and continue to support our PAC with regular contributions!

Tune in to the Blue View Podcast!

More than 15 episodes of the FOP's weekly podcast, the *Blue View*, are now available on the FOP's YouTube channel. Hosted by National President Patrick Yoes, the podcast features guests from Capitol Hill and within the FOP, as well as law enforcement experts and leaders from around the country, to gain insight into the issues and current events in the law enforcement community.

The *Blue View* podcast can be found on **Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music** and **YouTube. #FOP**

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Social Media Policies and First Amendment Rights

When Elon Musk purchased Twitter last month, many declared free speech restored.

However, the First Amendment is not always a shield, especially when the speech occurs on social media. Networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are increasingly utilized as tools for law enforcement purposes. The advantages of social media include discovering and investigating criminal activity, collecting evidence, informing communities about volatile situations, and identifying names and locations of dangerous individuals or activities. These platforms also allow citizens and officers to interact and share their viewpoints on topics — both mundane and meaningful. In turn, such open platforms can entice some to make impulsive comments that can have lasting implications.

Thus, while social media sites can be used to assist law enforcement, police departments across the country have opted to enact policies to ensure that social media sites are not being used to hinder policing. Most commonly, these policies prohibit the use of ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, harassing material and discriminatory comments. Some policies take it a step further and prohibit any comments that could be reasonably interpreted as having an adverse effect toward the employer. Other terms include warnings that personal use of social media has the potential to impact the department, and in turn the employee, or to establish that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy while engaging in social media.

Employees are challenging these policies by claiming that they violate the First Amendment right to free speech. Accepting public

Just the Facts:

» Social media networks are increasingly used as tools by law enforcement, but along with the many advantages come potential pitfalls. Departments nationwide have enacted policies limiting employees' use of these platforms, both professionally and personally, some of which have been challenged with claims they violate the First Amendment. Based on the legal precedent, agencies must ensure their policies strike a balance between employees' right to meaningful discourse and the department's interest of efficient policing.

employment comes with certain limitations of freedom; however, the Supreme Court of the United States has held that public employees may not “be compelled to relinquish the First Amendment rights they would otherwise enjoy as citizens to comment on matters of public interest.” *Pickering v. Bd. of Educ.*, 391 U.S. 563, 568 (1968); *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 547 U.S. 410, 418 (2006).

The Supreme Court's decision in *Pickering v. Board of Education* is the backbone to the First Amendment analysis. The court established a framework to balance employees' right of free speech with the government's interest in efficient workforce operations. Under *Pickering*, to establish that certain speech is protected by the First Amendment, the employee must show that: (1) they spoke on a matter of public concern; (2) they spoke as a private citizen rather than a public employee; and (3) their interest as a citizen in speaking on the matter outweighed the government's interest, as an employer, in promoting the efficiency of the public services it performs through its employees.

Courts apply a version of the *Pickering* framework when assessing

the constitutionality of a social media policy. Courts look at the policy's impact on both the employees whose speech may be curtailed as well as the public who may be interested in what the employee has to say. Importantly, courts look at the policy's breadth, meaning the scope of the prohibition on disseminating information on social media. Courts will also look at the employer's justification for the policy. This version of the *Pickering* test places a heavy burden on the government to show that the interest of the employee's expression and potential audience is outweighed by that expression's necessary impact on the operation of the government.

As an example, the Fourth Circuit held in *Liverman v. City of Petersburg*, 844 F.3d 400 (4th Cir. 2016), that the police department's social media policy was unconstitutional. In *Liverman*, two veteran officers engaged in a Facebook conversation about the pitfalls of “rookie cops becoming instructors” (*Id.* at 405). The police department had a social media policy that prohibited “[n]egative comments on the internal operations of the Bureau, or specific conduct of supervisors or peers that impacts the public's perception of the department” and, even more

broadly, comments “that would tend to discredit or reflect unfavorably upon” the department (*Id.* at 404). The Fourth Circuit invalidated the policy as “unconstitutionally overbroad” (*Id.* at 407). The court concluded that there could be “no doubt” that the policy prohibited protected speech, as it “prevent[ed] plaintiffs and any other officer from making unfavorable comments on the operations and policies of the Department, arguably the ‘paradigmatic’ matter of public concern” (*Id.* at 407–08). The Fourth Circuit emphasized the “astonishing breadth” of the policy by looking at the general prohibition of negative comments on internal operations and on specific conduct of other employees, finding that this would prohibit just about **any** comment (*Id.* at 408).

However, courts uphold policies that prohibit offensive, racist and violent posts. For example, in *Fenico v. City of Philadelphia*, --F.Supp.3d--, 2022WL 226069 (E.D. Pa. Jan. 26, 2022), a group of current and former members of the Philadelphia Police Department were reprimanded

because of content they posted on their personal Facebook accounts. The court found that much of the commentary belittled, mocked and even threatened others based on race, ethnicity and religion (*Id.* at 14). The court looked at the department’s social media policy in effect at the time the officers created their posts. Part of such policy prohibited “the use of ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults, material that is harassing defamatory, fraudulent, or discriminatory, or content and communications that would not be acceptable in a City workplace or under city agency, policy, or practice on social media” (*Id.* at 16). The court held that the officers knew and understood the policy and proceeded to violate it by making such offensive and violent posts (*Id.* at 14). Therefore, the court found that the police department’s interest in promoting efficiency, maintaining and preserving the public’s trust, promoting a diverse workforce, avoiding potential disruptiveness, and discouraging ethnic and religious animus outweighed the officers’ right to free speech (*Id.*).

Accordingly, police departments are tasked with implementing a social media policy that strikes a balance. The policy must have appropriate prohibitions and disciplinary measures, but not restrict the employees’ right to meaningful public discourse. Social media sites will continue to grow and evolve, as will their benefits for law enforcement purposes. As such, it is crucial to find the right balance between an officer’s First Amendment right of free speech and the department’s interest of efficient policing. **FOP**

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BLUE VIEW

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New Retired Law Enforcement Concealed Carry Legal Defense Coverage



The FOP Legal Defense Plan’s Board of Trustees has had numerous requests from current and prospective participants to review broadening coverage under the current HR-218 LEOSA Plan. After diligent review and analysis, the Board voted to make the following changes.

The HR-218 Plan coverage was replaced with the **FOP Retired Law Enforcement Concealed Carry Legal Defense Coverage (CCC)**. The expanded coverage will offer **unlimited** legal defense for civil and criminal claims associated with the legal carrying and/or use of a concealed weapon: All reasonable and necessary legal defense costs are now covered in full when using a plan attorney. This new expanded plan will provide coverage for not only those retirees who were

qualified under LEOSA, but also those retirees who are qualified under their own state laws to carry a concealed weapon. **Coverage does not include claims related specifically to the open carrying of firearms.**

The CCC went into effect on **January 1, 2021**. If you are a current HR-218 retired member, unlimited coverage and the enhanced benefits automatically took effect on January 1, 2021, with no additional cost. Upon renewal of your coverage in 2021, the new annual fee of \$75 will take effect. For all new retired members joining the plan after January 1, 2021, the annual fee is \$75.

If you are an active law enforcement officer covered by the FOP Legal Defense Plan, LEOSA coverage is already included. CCC is for **retired law**

enforcement officers only and separate from the FOP Legal Defense Plan.

The Board is excited to provide yet another excellent benefit for our FOP law enforcement brothers and sisters. In today’s unstable times, it is crucial to make sure you are protected.

The Legal Plan values your business and thanks you for your continued support. To enroll, please visit our website at foplegal.com and select Join Now > Retired Law Enforcement Concealed Carry Coverage. Full coverage, eligibility and other exclusions can be found in the Plan Description at foplegal.com, under the About > Library section. If you have questions pertaining to these changes, enrollment or the plan in general, please contact Hylant at (800) 341-6038 or via email at info@foplegal.com. **FOP**



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Why Arbitration Matters

It seems that over the last few years, lawmakers and media outlets across the country have been demonizing not just cops, but also the unions and collective bargaining rights that protect “bad cops.” This is not new and not at all surprising, given the outright attack on collective bargaining that has existed for over a decade. Whether it is the Supreme Court in the *Janus* decision, the Ohio and Wisconsin governors and legislatures repealing laws, or public sentiment, the focus is on law enforcement and hard-won rights to negotiate terms and conditions of employment and safeguards against arbitrary discipline.

Now more than ever, it is of paramount importance to be on guard against those who would weaken the profession by weakening your right to bargain and to challenge unjust discipline. Key among these rights is arbitration. Given the current legislative momentum concerning the future of law enforcement labor laws, it is more important than ever to understand what

Just the Facts:

>> With law enforcement officers and their unions increasingly demonized, it's more important than ever to be on guard against attacks on collective bargaining rights. Key among those is arbitration, an expedient and cost-effective means of resolving disputes between employees and employers in an impartial way that bolsters public confidence. The Labor Services Division is here to guide you through arbitration and all labor dispute processes.

arbitration is and why it matters, and to educate others about it.

Arbitration is an expedient and cost-effective way to resolve disputes between employees and employers during negotiation impasses, as well as cases of unlawful discipline and terminations. Arbitrators can hold a hearing and rule on a case in weeks or months, as opposed to the courts, which can take years and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per case — dollars that are not then able to be used for education, health care, housing, etc. In addition, arbitration has worked

effectively for over 100 years to resolve labor disputes that in and of themselves would cost the economy millions, if not billions, of dollars.

Just as you would not expect a sports team to referee their own game, you should not be expected to allow an employer to dictate the outcome of a labor dispute. An impartial dispute resolution process also provides confidence and certainty in how all people are treated under the law. Public confidence in the government is founded upon due process. Without a process that is fair and impartial, as required by the Constitution, the public can have no confidence that they will be served and protected as the Constitution requires. Yes, there are flaws and public confidence is low right now. The way to restore that confidence is to strengthen rights, not dilute them.

Though there is immense power in dispute resolution procedures like arbitration, the NFOP understands that the navigation of them can be daunting. That is why the Labor Services Division roots itself in guiding our brothers and sisters through all labor dispute processes. If you would like more information on how we can help you with dispute resolution and what it would look like for you, contact us at labor@fop.net. **FOP**

SHARE YOUR STORY!

So many of us learn from the experiences of others, especially others with whom we share things in common. Do you have a story to tell of overcoming adversity in your own life? The National Officer Wellness Committee would like to hear it!

Whether you would just like to share your story privately with peers on the Committee or are willing to share with readers so that all can learn from it and celebrate with you, we want to hear from you! Contact us confidentially at officerwellness@fop.net.





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