

GEAR FOR THE NEW YEAR SWEEPSTAKES // P. 3

FOP



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On the cover: Photo courtesy of Michigan FOP Vice President John Maranco, past president of the Stanley Clark Southwestern Oakland County Lodge #128



Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police

National Headquarters 701 Marriott Drive, Nashville, TN 37214
1-800-451-2711 | Phone (615) 399-0900 | Fax (615) 399-0400
Email: gfpop@fop.net | www.fop.net

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Norco, LA | (504) 234-4300

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Evolving Through These Changing Times



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Patrick Yoes at (504) 234-4300, or pyoes@fop.net.

Our profession is evolving. Some of these changes are driven by technology, others by society and, of course, by our own internal efforts to improve the public safety services we provide to our communities.

Law enforcement is a noble profession worthy of the highest respect — a respect that was once universally given. Unfortunately, over the years, activists in our society have worked to degrade the respect we are due. Recent events indicate that they are having some success, as we see a growing percentage of the general public viewing officers with suspicion or disdain. In far too many cases, it has escalated into physical hostility. We are public servants, not public enemies. We live and raise our families in these same communities and we have a vested interest in keeping them safe.

Our jobs are becoming increasingly dangerous. Ambush attacks on law enforcement have grown over the last eight years, and a recent study by the FBI concluded that in many cases they were motivated by a desire to hurt or kill a police officer.

As a law enforcement officer, I have spent my 35-year career answering calls for help. As president, I am committed and stand ready to work with anyone who is genuinely willing to work collectively to help improve policing in our country.

In September, my congressional testimony before the House Judiciary Oversight Committee hearing on policing practices was a call to action for Congress to reduce the targeted violence against law enforcement by once again passing H.R. 1325, the Protect and Serve Act, introduced by Representatives Rutherford (R-Fla.) and Demings (D-Fla.). This would not make every attack against an officer a federal crime, but it would give the U.S. Department of Justice a tool,

in certain limited circumstances, to fight back against targeted attacks on police like the ones that occurred in Dallas, Texas, and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Last year, this legislation was unanimously passed by the committee, and then passed in the House by an overwhelming vote of 382-35.

AS PRESIDENT, I AM COMMITTED AND STAND READY TO WORK WITH ANYONE WHO IS GENUINELY WILLING TO WORK COLLECTIVELY TO HELP IMPROVE POLICING IN OUR COUNTRY.

Passing this legislation again would demonstrate that the House of Representatives does support the men and women in law enforcement, because right now we feel abandoned.

These changing attitudes are also having an impact on the ability of our profession to retain and recruit the very best and brightest. Applications for positions in law enforcement have decreased this year by 66%, leaving 100 many agencies short-staffed and overworked.

I also challenged Congress to talk about an uncomfortable subject. I called for their support on what should be a bipartisan issue: mental health and wellness among the men and women in law enforcement. Being a police officer is not easy. It has evolved to include the role of therapist, marriage counselor, addiction specialist and spiritual advisor. According to John Violanti, a police psychologist and former law enforcement officer, the

average civilian will experience only one truly traumatic event in their lifetime. Comparably, the average police officer will experience three to four truly traumatic events over their career.

There is no doubt that this increased exposure can take a tremendous toll on our physical and mental well-being. First responders suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression at a rate of five times higher than our civilian counterparts, yet little has been done to address it and the number of police suicides seems to be grossly underreported. In 2017, 140 police officers took their own lives. In contrast, 46 officers died after being fatally shot on the job that same year. Police officers run toward danger when most people run away. Rather than cast them aside, it is our moral and fiduciary responsibility to fix that which is broken in the service of others.

In that service, we must continue to work hard to build trust and respect in the communities we protect. There must be open dialogue and a willingness to build consensus. Most will agree that we have many challenges, but if we work together, our potential is endless.

In conclusion, the new energy infused into this great Order by so many is both exciting and infectious. By the time you read this, I will have completed my first 100 days in office. I will be distributing a list of our collective accomplishments during this short time. As your president, I remain committed to working collaboratively with each and every one of you to improve policing in our nation and move our organization forward as the united voice of law enforcement. **FOP**

Enough Is Enough: The FOP Pushes Back



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Joe Gamaldi at jgamaldi@fopu.org.

It is no surprise to anyone reading this article that there are opportunistic politicians, anti-police activists and some in the mainstream media who have made it their mission to denigrate and delegitimize the courageous men and women of law enforcement. They have largely been successful in this endeavor because leaders within the law enforcement community have not been consistently pushing back on their rhetoric. Some of these activists have even made a career out of it, while others appear to be making it a part of their political platform, which means it will not stop. Well, if you haven't noticed, the FOP has stepped up to the plate to put an end to it. We will carry the mantle to protect our profession and our 349,000 brothers and sisters nationwide.

This worthy task has already begun. We have adopted an aggressive social media presence, calling out anti-police rhetoric in all its forms and those who spew it. The FOP has been weighing in, particularly on newsworthy events where groups have targeted police officers to make sure the public understands just what we are up against. All the while, we continue to spread positive stories about the amazing work law enforcement does on a daily basis to remind everyone just who the good guys and gals are. As a result of our efforts, our social media following and reach have grown significantly over the last few months.

We are also creating original content to push back on the false narratives that continue to be used against us by everyone from presidential candidates to local politicians. Our first original commercial highlighted the findings of a study on fatal police shootings conducted by Michigan State University and the University of Maryland, which was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Their conclusions will surprise no one who has ever put the uniform on. The

study looked at every fatal police officer shooting in 2015. Researchers found that in 99% of the shootings, the suspect had a weapon, and that in 95% of the cases, the suspect was in the act of assaulting a citizen or police officer. In addition, they found that there was no correlation between the race of the officer and the race of the suspect who had been shot, concluding that race played absolutely no role in the shootings. The most telling information was summarized by Joseph Cesario, study co-author and professor of psychology at MSU:

"Many people ask whether black or white citizens are more likely to be shot and why. We found that violent crime rates are

the driving force behind fatal shootings. Our data show that the rate of crime by each racial group correlates with the likelihood of citizens from that racial group being shot. If you live in a county that has a lot of white people committing crimes, white people are more likely to be shot. If you live in a county that has a lot of black people committing crimes, black people are more likely to be shot. It is the best predictor we have of fatal police shootings."

This commercial was just the first, and I encourage you to swing by the National FOP Facebook and Twitter pages

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For the Good of the Order

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

Brothers and Sisters, I hope this *Journal* finds you and your family well. This Winter edition is packed full of information to educate you, expose you to technology and equipment to help you in fulfilling our noble profession and keep you connected with your National officers. Please share the articles with your fellow officers, but especially those who have not learned the benefits of membership in the Fraternal Order of Police, the country's largest and most powerful voice for professional law enforcement.

We have been extremely busy handling your business in the National office. Since the close of business at the National Conference in New Orleans, it's been nonstop and full speed ahead. President Yoes has empowered us with a dynamic agenda. He has set the bar high and set the expectations for results even higher. Every week, your National Executive Board has a telephonic conference to go over what we have done the previous week and to plot strategy for the upcoming week and beyond. President Yoes has also implemented a monthly National trustees teleconference, which allows all 56 National trustees to interact and know firsthand what business is going on in the Order. These are powerful tools in information sharing and leadership.

Our vice president, Joe Gammaldi, has championed our technology and social media marketing. Brother Joe has been charged with leading the implementation of our new FOP app which will streamline real-time information and allow for our members to connect with each other. Look for a rollout of this valuable tool in early spring.

Our treasurer, Tom Penoza, is the "rock" of your National Board. He has been busy giving us all advice and counsel. Brother Tom has been instrumental in developing better accounting in our Accounts Receivable department in the National office and in helping the various State and local lodges maintain or get back

their IRS tax status. We are blessed to have a brother with the institutional knowledge and expertise that Tom shares with us. Brother Tom is truly our "go-to guy."

Brother Les Neri, our second vice president, is no doubt the most analytical member of our Board. If there is a contract to be reviewed or a problem with a vendor, Brother Les is who we turn to. It is amazing to watch Les in action. I have never observed someone pay attention to detail the way Brother Les does. There is no one more expert in writing, reviewing and interpreting contracts than Brother Les.

Our sergeant at arms, Keith Turney, is the energy of the Board. Brother Keith is a premier labor leader and, as we all know, the face and voice of CRI-TAC. Anytime there is a special project or extensive research that needs to be compiled for a decision to be made, Keith always steps up to take on the challenge. He delves into the issues and brings forward the facts so that the rest of us can be made informed choices.

Brother Rob Pride is solid! He is the eyes and ears of the Order as our chairman of the Board of Trustees. Rob guides us with logic and his positive demeanor. He is truly a "gentle giant," being ever respectful of everyone's voice while setting the agenda for the betterment of the Order. His passion is looking out for the wants and needs of our line officers.

By now, you should have received your new 2020 dues card. The design is simple but reflects who we are (see page 10). I want to thank Brother Steve Bollinger of the Georgia FOP for granting us permission in using this trademarked logo. I also give special thanks to my wife, Pam Holderfield, who volunteered helping with the membership card mailings.

I hope too that you enjoy our new "Member Spotlight" section. Last edition, we featured worthy member New Jersey State Lodge President Bob Fox, and in this edition, we feature Sister Karla Prunedu, secretary for the Texas State Lodge, Texas

is on the fast track to becoming the largest State Lodge, and for good reason. Texas' leadership is energized and is spreading the message of what the FOP is doing around the nation and in our nation's capital.

As your National secretary, one of the most common calls we get at the office is from local lodge presidents and secretaries complaining that they are unable to access information in the VUE system (membership database). Generally, the problem is because local lodge officer information has not been updated. At this time of the year, when most lodges have just elected new officers, make sure that you have taken the time to update your local lodge officer information. Even if the officers did not change, we need an updated roster. The system has a "time-out section" embedded, which means if your old term expired on December 31, 2019, unless you update your new term of office, on January 1, 2020, and beyond, you will not be able to gain access to the system.

I pray that you will consider attending this year's Leadership Matters Seminar in Nashville, Tennessee. It will be a new and updated program. Whether you are a new or returning president, secretary, treasurer, board member or trustee, I am sure you will find something new and exciting to take back to your lodge. Even if you are not an elected officer, you are welcome to come. As a matter of fact, you are especially encouraged to come as a member to learn about the roles and responsibilities of lodge leadership, so that you will be prepared if you decide to seek office in your State or local lodge in the future.

To all lodge officers, read your local, State and Grand Lodge Constitutions and By-Laws. As law enforcement professionals, we pride ourselves on practicing the rule of law. The same holds true in the management and administration of our various lodges. The second most frequent call I receive at the National secretary's office

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Financial Responsibility

// WRITE TO US! If you have further questions, contact Tom Penoza at tomfop@aol.com.

In my capacity as National FOP treasurer, I have frequently been called upon to assist State and local lodges that are in financial trouble. When I get a call for help, the individual explains their problem and the first thing I do with the caller is review their lodge's Constitution and By-Laws and financial procedures. In most cases, a review of the lodge's financial procedures (or lack thereof) shows they are violating their Constitution and By-Laws as it relates to handling and expending the funds of the lodge.

The basic answers on how to run your lodge and how to handle your finances can usually be found in your Constitution and By-Laws. These are the rules that govern your lodge. As lodge leaders, we must be familiar with our local lodge's Constitution and By-Laws. It would be beneficial to review your State Lodge's Constitution and By-Laws as well as the National Lodge's Constitution and By-Laws.

The National Lodge hosts a seminar each February in Nashville, Tennessee, where we provide lodge leadership with all the information they need to run their lodge.

If you want to be an elected officer in your lodge, you need to take the time to learn how to properly perform your duties in the office you hold. This starts by knowing your Constitution and By-Laws and making sure they are followed.

In most cases, lodge leaders are full-time police officers and part-time FOP leaders. Unfortunately, that is how it usually is. But as a lodge officer, you have an obligation to learn as much about properly running your lodge as you can. You should draw on the resources available to you from your State Lodge and the National Lodge.

The following is fiduciary responsibility information for nonprofit organizations that we provide at our seminars:

Fiduciary Responsibility of Nonprofit Board Members

Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the organization's annual financial statements.

Individual Board Member Responsibilities

- Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as special events
- Be informed about the organization's mission, services, policies and programs
- Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings
- Serve on committees and offer to take on special assignments
- Make a personal financial contribution to the organization
- Inform others about the organization
- Suggest possible nominees to the board who can make significant contributions to the work of the board and the organization
- Keep up to date on developments in the organization's field
- Follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies
- Refrain from making special requests of the staff
- Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the organization's annual financial statements

What Are the Legal Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards?

A board member must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out his or her responsibilities to the organization. These standards are usually described as the duty of care, the duty of loyalty and the duty of obedience.

- Duty of care** describes the level of competence that is expected of a board member and is commonly expressed as the duty of "care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances." This means that a board member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when he or she makes a decision as a steward of the organization.
- Duty of loyalty** is a standard of faithfulness: a board member must give undivided allegiance when making decisions affecting the organization. This means that a board member can never use information obtained as a member for personal gain, but must act in the best interests of the organization.
- Duty of obedience** calls for board members to be faithful to the organization's mission. They are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization.

How Do We Safeguard Against Conflict of Interest?

When the personal or professional concerns of a board member or a staff member affect his or her ability to put the welfare of the organization before personal benefit, conflict of interest exists.

Why Must We Be Concerned About Conflict of Interest?

Board service carries with it important ethical obligations. In addition, board members have a legal responsibility to ensure the prudent management of an organization's resources. In fact, they may be held liable for the organization's actions. A 1974 court decision known as

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Protect Yourself in Case of Disability



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Les Neri at lneri@fop.com.

Sometimes the unexpected can cause lifetime hardships, not just for an officer, but for their family and anyone dependent upon them. Nothing can be as devastating as a career-ending disability that prevents an officer from earning the income they expected to earn as a police officer. So let's consider what protections are in place, and can be in place, to provide income.

All states have some form of workers' compensation statute that provides income for on-the-job injuries. Some states have mandatory provisions for a disability pension for service-connected injuries. However, very few states, if any, provide for protection for non-service connected disabilities. What is out there?

To be eligible for Social Security, an officer must be unable to perform the substantial duties of any employment that exists in the national economy. In other words, the officer must not only be unable to perform the duties of a police officer, but also any other full-time work taking into account the officer's age, education and work experience. Social Security disability is not dependent upon whether the disability is service-connected or not. Keep in mind that unlike the requirements to eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision for Social Security retirement — which can

take up to 30 years of Social Security-covered employment to fully eliminate the WEP offset — the earnings requirement for Social Security varies depending on your age at the time of disability. The general rule is that at most only 40 quarters (10 years) of covered employment is needed. The amount of monthly benefits is almost the same as if the officer was at full Social Security retirement age.

Additionally, all officers can be covered by Medicare. Eligibility for Medicare can be achieved two ways: age or disability. The age requirement is 65. For disabilities, any officer who is eligible for Social Security disability is eligible for Medicare on the 25th month after Social Security disability commences.

In summary, an officer can be eligible for monthly Social Security disability benefits and Medicare 25 months thereafter if he or she is unable to work, no matter the reason for the disability. Considering the covered quarters requirement, officers whose on-the-job employment is not covered by Social Security may still be eligible for Social Security disability depending upon how much covered employment that officer had before, after and during his or her law enforcement work history.

Also of great importance is long-term disability (LTD) insurance. LTD policies

vary greatly, but usually like Social Security disability, the cause of the disability does not matter. Some officers are fortunate enough to have this benefit provided through employment. Officers who don't have LTD benefits and are unable to achieve it, may want to consider the purchase of an individual policy. Usually, an LTD policy will provide monthly benefits until age 65.

An important consideration in either an employer-sponsored or privately purchased long-term disability policy is the definition of disability. Some plans may pay benefits in the event that an officer is disabled from their occupation as a police officer, commonly referred to as an "own-occupation" provision. Others require that the officer is disabled from all gainful employment. The "own occupation" definition is always better since benefits will be payable even if the officer can do other work, so long as the officer cannot work as a police officer. Pay close attention to the policy, since many policies change the definition of disability after 24 months. It is common for policies to provide that benefits are payable for 24 months if the officer is disabled from working as a police officer, but after that, the officer must be unable to work in any occupation in order to continue receiving benefits. **FOP**

2020 Membership Cards

The new per capita season has begun, which means the new 2020 membership cards are now being printed and mailed out to lodges. The Grand Lodge would like to recognize FOP member Steve Bollinger from DeKalb County, Georgia, lodge #10 for his part in the design of the new membership cards. Steve and his company, Blue Line Productions, have given the Grand Lodge permission to use their trademarked Blue Line Identifier as the featured design on the 2020 membership cards. **FOP**



What Keeps You up at Night?

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

Well, first I must clarify my article's title, as I am aware that we are a 24/7 organization, so it is unfair to ask what keeps you up at night. To rephrase the question: What keeps you awake? What keeps you from getting that much-needed sleep you deserve? I'm sure a universal answer for all of us would be: Who of us will be next? Who will be the next law enforcement official to succumb to the ills of our profession? Who will be the next officer to be targeted in a sniper attack? Who will be the next officer to be killed during a traffic stop? Who will be the next officer to be overcome by a person they are trying to take into custody? Who will be the next officer to take their own life to escape the demons that our profession sometimes produces?

When I started my career in law enforcement, I was well aware of the dangers of this job, and I took preventive measures to lessen the likelihood of my own demise. I practiced gun retention techniques, enrolled in martial arts classes and attended officer safety training. I always updated my knowledge library on who the bad guys were and where I could encounter them. And if all the preplanning failed, I made sure that my loved ones were prepared for the possibility that there may be a day when I do not come home from my shift. I had an up-to-date will and letters of reassurance to my spouse and kids. I also came to terms with the fact that all the care and preparation in the world may not be enough.

I never imagined that I would personally know four officers who were killed in the line of duty and would be honored on memorial walls in their local cities, states and the nation's capital. I never imagined that I would be exposed to hundreds of line-of-duty deaths on a yearly basis through my involvement with the FOP! I never imagined that I would be witness

to such inhumanity among the human race; but here we all are, lying awake and wondering.

Being a law enforcement officer has never been easy. For most of us, it was a calling — one that we eagerly embraced. We felt that, overall, we could make a difference and be a benefit to society. We understood that there were those who we would encounter that may want to do us harm. We understood that there was a segment of the world who believed that society's laws were made for others and not them. We knew that we would laugh and cry over society's ups and downs as our civilization evolved. And it was all OK! We were providing a necessary function to the overall wellness of our communities.

**WE MUST CONTINUE TO
BE THE CONSCIENCE FOR
SOCIETY AND ALWAYS REMIND
THOSE WE SERVE THAT WE
OFTEN WILLINGLY SACRIFICE
OUR VERY LIVES FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF THEIRS.**

Unfortunately, somewhere along the journey in the 21st century, policing went away, and the lines between right and wrong within society started to blur. It has become acceptable to battle against a lawful arrest, and if one doesn't like a specific law, it is OK to refuse to follow it. Everyone is special and no one is accountable. We have now evolved into areas of law where prosecutors no longer feel an obligation to prosecute laws that society has set for itself, because they too know better than the rest of us. Officers are being shot at and sometimes killed, yet if they return fire,

they are often asked, "Did you really have to shoot back?"

I was recently talking with a colleague from Scotland who acquiesced that there are areas in his community where law enforcement doesn't go because violence will be inevitable. It seems best to allow the natural state of affairs in that community tend to itself, lest we blame the police for inciting violence by their mere presence!

It is clear our society is polarized, and that our political leaders take great advantage of placating to the extremes of both sides. There seems to be a lot of finger-pointing and solution building that liberates one side and oppresses the other. Unfortunately, the only people in the middle are professional law enforcement officers trying to navigate a landscape where they are always deemed wrong. This unstable environment has consequences of its own. Recruitment is at an all-time low and seasoned officers are leaving in droves as quickly as their pensions will permit.

I do know we cannot surrender in these confusing times. Now more than ever, our communities need us. We need to find innovated ways to reach those who feel disenfranchised. We must continue to serve and protect, even those who are ungrateful for the effort. We must encourage others to join this noble profession. We must continue to speak up where we witness inequities in our political structures. We must continue to be the conscience for society and always remind those we serve that we often willingly sacrifice our very lives for the preservation of theirs.

As I lay awake wondering who of us will be next, I am comforted in the notion that we have remained as strong as we are in these troubling times with a sense of dedication that has withstood the sands of time. We remain FOP strong! **FOP**

Get Your Lodge Politically Involved



WRITE TO US! If you have further questions, contact Bob Pride at lodges2pride@gmail.com.

For many communities across the country, this time of year brings about election time. I know here in my hometown of Loveland, Colorado, we are currently in the midst of elections for seats on our city council and for mayor. It is a heated season, and our city is not immune to some of the dirty politics normally reserved for larger races. And while staying above the fray and out of the mud-slinging, my local lodge is actively involved, supporting and endorsing those candidates we believe will best support our public safety mission and our members.

Getting politically involved has had nothing but a positive impact on our

members. Politicians, even local ones, want the FOP's endorsement! There is no doubt that an FOP endorsement has an impact on elections and has given victory to candidates who were otherwise not favored to win. Those seeking office know the power our FOP star can have on their success, both during and after an election.

When we first chartered, my local lodge was very hesitant to be involved in elections. More than anything, it was due to lack of knowledge or experience in that realm. But as our lodge grew and evolved along with our agency, it became clear that we needed to be involved in choosing our city leaders for the benefit


of our members. With guidance from others around who'd done it before, as well as advice from State and National FOP leaders, we jumped in with both feet. We took time to meet with city council members on an individual basis to educate them about the FOP, what we are about and how we could assist them. Over time, we developed an outstanding working relationship with them that we still enjoy today. Those seeking office seek us out to meet and ask about our endorsement process. This has given us a strong, collaborative voice in important matters

Continued on page 14 >

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VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 7

(@GLFOP) and have a look.

In addition to our work on social media, the National Board has also been appearing in the traditional mediums, including numerous national news outlets, to ensure that our message is getting out to the masses and our story is being told. Make no mistake, the FOP is and will continue to be the voice of law enforcement in this country. You can be sure we will continue to speak up and support our brave brothers and sisters who put a uniform on everyday to protect our communities.

Be safe out there, and as always, if you need anything I am only a phone call, text, email, Facebook message or DM on Twitter (@JoeGarnaldi) away. **FOP**

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 8

are questions on Constitution and By-Laws. I can certainly render opinions of interpretation of the National Constitution and By-Laws, but what I have found is that many State and local lodges have not revised their respective Constitution and By-Laws in years. This year would be a great time to take on the major task of revising your rules and ensure you are in compliance with the Grand Lodge.

In closing, thank you for allowing me to serve you as your National secretary. It is a high honor and privilege, and I take on the responsibility with pride and enthusiasm. Be safe out there and I will see or talk to you soon. **FOP**

TREASURER'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 9

the "Sibley Hospital case" set a precedent by confirming that board members can be held legally liable for conflict of interest because it constitutes a breach of their fiduciary responsibility.

What Should Be Included in a Conflict of Interest Policy?

A policy on conflict of interest has three essential elements:

1. Full disclosure — Board members and staff members in decision-making roles should make known their connections with groups doing business with the organization. This information should be provided annually.
2. Board member abstention from discussion and voting — Board members who have an actual or potential conflict of interest should not participate in discussions or vote on matters affecting transactions between the organization and the other group.
3. Staff member abstention from decision-making — Staff members who have an actual or potential conflict should not be substantively involved in decision-making affecting such transactions. **FOP**

NATIONAL TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 12

such as pay, staffing, equipment, a new training facility and even a specific seat at the table during the selection process for our new chief.

I share this with my brothers and sisters to say: If you are not politically involved in your local elections (and you are not prohibited by law or ordinance from doing so), jump in! The process will no doubt be intimidating at first. After all, we are cops. Most of us consciously do our best to stay away from the political process or issues. But once you get your feet wet and see what swimming in the political pool can do for your members, it actually becomes more enjoyable, and you will get better at it as you go. And since your lodge leaders become a little surlier at it, watch out! You will be amazed at what you can accomplish when your local political leaders are the ones who helped put into office and who are committed to making public safety and those who serve within it a priority.

If you are interested in your lodge getting more politically involved, please reach out to other local lodges, your State Lodge leadership or your National Executive Board. I promise you, no matter how complex the political landscape is in your area, there is no election issue another lodge leader in our 350,000-member organization hasn't navigated before.

I and my fellow National FOP Executive Board members stand at the ready to assist you at any time with this very important and necessary endeavor. We are **FOP strong!** **FOP**

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Karla Pruneda



When Larado, Texas, Police Officer Karla Pruneda attended her first local lodge meeting in 2014, it didn't take long for her to realize that the Fraternal Order of Police was something that she wanted to be a part of.

Pruneda recalls that Larado FOP Lodge 911 then-president David Carmona had invited her to attend the meeting with no strings attached to see if the FOP was the right organization for her. After talking with lodge leaders and members, she knew her answer. "I remember how welcomed I felt," she recalls. "One meeting led to my membership, and I've been a member ever since."

For Pruneda, a patrol officer with the Larado Police Department for the past seven years, the FOP's purpose is simple: "We support our brothers and sisters no matter where they are" in the country, she says. "Almost anywhere you go, you can find an FOP member with a willingness to help. We care about each and every one of our members."

The FOP's collective network of support among law enforcement and its role in the betterment of the profession is a big reason why Pruneda joined the organization and why she has become one of the Texas FOP's leading voices.

In 2018, Pruneda was elected as secretary for the Texas State Lodge, which is headquartered in Austin and represents more than 14,000 active and retired police officers. Her journey to the position started when her lodge's local trustee became unable to attend the Texas Board of Directors meetings. She was asked if she could fill in, and she said yes. "During that first meeting, I met members throughout the state and learned of the goal the Texas FOP was moving toward," she says. "I asked a lot of questions — maybe too many questions — but I was eager to learn."

She continued attending meetings for a year and a half, and

was eventually asked if she would consider a role on the Executive Board. "I was hesitant, but I took the opportunity," she says, and she was officially elected at the 2018 Texas Biennial Conference.

Since becoming secretary, Pruneda has taken an active role in remodeling the State Lodge office, both aesthetically and operationally, to better serve members. As a result, the office has improved its business practices in record-keeping, documentation, accountability and much more. "It has not been an easy task, but as our membership continues to grow, we at the State office strive for the better," she says.

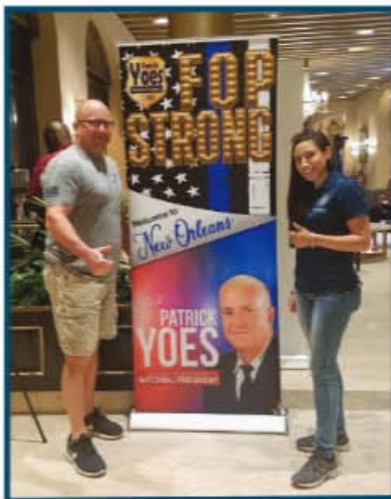
This streamlining of office procedures also falls in line with her main goal as secretary, which is to pave the way for those who hold positions on the Executive Board in the future. "At some point, someone else will hold this position as secretary. I believe what most often keeps us from stepping forward to lead is not knowing how or

where to look," she says. "I don't want that to be the case for the Texas FOP; I want my knowledge and experience and that of the other Board members available for those in the future."

When asked about what accomplishments she is most proud of in her work with the FOP thus far, Pruneda answers modestly: "I wouldn't say I'm proud. I say I'm privileged and honored to be a part of what has taken place in the Texas FOP! During my time in office, our membership has grown quite rapidly. Our 14,000-plus members have put their trust in me and those on our Board, and that's quite an honor."

Pruneda, who is the only woman on Texas' Executive Board, represents the next generation of FOP leaders who will guide the organization into the future, and it's a role she's more than prepared to take on.

"I'm told I'm young and new and have so much to learn, and I cannot disagree. I believe I have so much more to learn, and I am glad for the experience I've had while on the Texas FOP Executive Board," she says. "It would not have happened had I not taken the opportunity set before me. For those who are wondering if they should take the next step into the role of leadership, do it! We need leaders for the future, and it starts with you." **FOP**





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"Dressed for success" takes on a whole different meaning when you're talking about tactical apparel. Law enforcement professionals expect their clothing to meet multiple standards. In addition to looking professional, tactical clothes and accessories must be constructed out of durable material, strong enough to take on the roughest of conditions. For added value, shirts, pants and vests should provide storage options, such as concealed pockets. Protective layers should never compromise an officer's ability to freely move. And in order for accessories — such as belts, eyewear and footwear — to qualify as tactical, they need to offer functional features not found in civilian versions. See what else tactical apparel designers have created to enhance law enforcement officers' ability to do the job.

WIN IT!

Enter for a chance to WIN! See page 3 for more info.



TRU-SPEC 24-7 SERIES ECO TEC TAC T-SHIRT

Material Matters
The 24-7 Series Eco Tec Tac T-shirt from Tru-Spec offers a lot of the features necessary to perform tactical tasks. The anti-microbial and moisture-wicking properties keep people dry even in cold temperatures. Each sleeve contains a convenient pen stall. Mesh side gussets allow for airflow, and a split drop-tail hem enhances back coverage. But it's the material that makes the difference. The no-pill, no-sag, four-way stretch fabric contains Repeve polyester, which is made out of recycled plastic bottles and has been certified as one of most earth-friendly fibers. Sizes S-4XL. **MSRP \$22.95**



WILEY X WX WAVE BLACK OPS

Eye on the Job
Even in winter, sunglasses serve a vital role for officers. They can guard eyes from daytime glare and snow reflection, plus conceal where your attention is directed. The smoke gray lenses of the Wiley X Wave Black Ops glasses do just that while also meeting safety standards for optical clarity. They're also prescription ready. The matte black frames are highlighted by half-rubber temples for both flexibility and a nonslip-grip fit. A T-Peg elastic strap is included to provide extra security. The glasses also satisfy standards for high-mass/high-velocity impacts. **MSRP \$100**

HAIX BLACK EAGLE SAFETY 55 MID SZ Find Your Footing

From cold temperatures to slippery surfaces, winter can be tough on feet. Black Eagle Safety 55 Mid SZ boots from HAIX address many environmental and situational considerations, such as keeping feet warm and dry in the harshest weather conditions. While the Secura liner is sealed along the upper leather to keep cold out and heat in, the inner lining tackles many vital tasks. It's watertight, abrasion resistant and prevents against blood and body fluids. The boot's exterior handles multiple terrains — the sole is molded out of a nonslip, nonmarking rubber that's also protected against heat, oil and gasoline. The Vario Wide Fit system allows for a more personalized fit for ultimate comfort. U.S. sizes 4-16. **MSRP \$299**



FIRST TACTICAL V2 PRO PERFORMANCE SHIRT Look Good, Feel Great

First Tactical combined the classical features of its popular Performing Polo shirt with the utilitarian nature of its V2 shirt to create the hybrid V2 Pro Performance Shirt. The professional appearance is enhanced by a no-curl collar, hidden buttons and ID write bar. General wearability is complemented by an Arms Technology Mechanical Stretch, anti-sag jersey body material, which has a wicking and anti-odor finish. There's also a double-layer woven yoke and running gusseted construction under arms to extend durability. It comes in midnight blue, green and black colors, as well as men's and women's sizes. **MSRP \$49.99**

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CONDOR LCS COBRA GUN BELT Belted In

With not one, but two layers of webbing, you know the LCS Cobra Gun Belt was built to take on big jobs. Condor designers started with a 2-inch heavy-duty webbing on which they layered SCLUBA webbing. Combined, the materials increase the capacity to carry heavy loads. Laser-cut slots easily accommodate modular attachments. Also, the belt can be worn as part of a two-belt system. Users can remove the inner anti-slip pad if seeking a sleeker fit. The belt is available in OD, black and coyote brown, and measures from small/medium (up to 38.5 inches in length) to large/extra-large (up to 50.5 inches in length). **MSRP \$80.95**



POINT BLANK ENTERPRISES PARACLETE SPECIAL RESPONSE VEST

Invested in Safety
Adaptable, multifunctional, durable and protective are all adjectives that describe the Paraclete Special Response Vest by Point Blank Enterprises. Users can configure the front panel to adapt to situational needs. Its hard armor plate pocket can house Shooter's cut plates while the back armor plate compartment accepts Shooter's or rectangle plates. The front ID panel hides an admin pocket. Several optional accessories can be added to the vest, such as a collar, yokes and other inserts. Additional features include Aspetto buckles for swift release and two hidden radio/magazine pockets on each side. The material is a MOLLE-compatible webbing, combined with a spacer mesh and Tweave liner for comfort. **MSRP base vest \$1,740-\$2,442; complete system \$3,222-\$4,665**



VOODOO TACTICAL VALOR STANDARD 10-RING "Q" BAG It's in the Bag

Fashion gurus always suggest matching a bag to your outfit, and for law enforcement professionals, that means finding a carrying case specifically outfitted to hold necessary tactical gear. The Voodoo Tactical Valor Standard 10-Ring "Q" Bag was specifically crafted for field duty. It's compact enough to easily be stashed inside a patrol bag, but large enough to safely store eye and ear protection, gun-cleaning items as well as ammunition and magazines. In fact, there are two removable double-mag pouches. A rollout mat creates a clean surface for weapons cleaning, and on the outside you'll find side and rear pockets. Locking zippers protect contents. **MSRP \$58.95** *Free P*



Light 'em Up

Law enforcement professionals rely on their senses to assess a scene and determine what actions must be taken to maintain safety for themselves and the public. Sight is especially critical for scanning surroundings, searching for evidence, observing suspects and watching the streets on patrol. Under less-optimal visual conditions like night, dusk, dawn or darkened buildings, it's hard to confront what can't be detected in the light of day. That's why flashlights and other lighting gear have become invaluable tools for law enforcement. Still, not every illuminating device is fit for service. See how manufacturers are incorporating greater operability, reliability and durability into the latest lighting technology.



POWERLAC USA PATROL-LE10X

/ Powered to Perform

Illuminating a scene, large or small, shouldn't require multiple light sources. Thanks to the Patrol-LE10X from PowerLac USA, you can brighten things up with a wide-pattern flood-shaped beam that covers more than 400 meters. Users can count on long runtimes, more than 55 hours at the low of 155 lumens and more than six hours with strobe or SOS modes. Even at the highest brightness, 4,200 lumens, you'll squeeze out nearly four hours of use. Recharge via a wall or 12-volt vehicle charging station. **MSRP \$229.95**



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STREAMLIGHT TLR-VIR II TACTICAL ILLUMINATOR

/ Triple Threat

The Streamlight TLR-VIR II Tactical Illuminator combines three functions into one compact rail-mounted attachment for M17/M18 pistols or long guns. The first function produces a high-intensity white LED beam that burns at 5,000 candela and 300 lumens. The second, an integrated infrared illuminator, partners with the third, a Class 1 "Eye Safe" IR aiming laser, for precision shooting in low visibility. The infrared illumination is generated by an 850-nanometer LED emitter with 600 mW/yr radiant intensity. The laser technology includes adjustment controls for windage and elevation. Don't worry about the powerful attachment throwing off aim by adding significant weight: It tips the scales at less than four ounces. **MSRP \$600**

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for more info.

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IT!

MF TACTICAL DELTA SERIES XP-LHD LED / Updated & Upgraded

MF Tactical has incorporated numerous improvements into its redesigned tactical Delta Series XP-LHD LED flashlight. It measures less than six inches long (10% smaller) and less than six ounces (12% lighter), but housed within this petite profile is the power to run four distinctive modes, including strobe with memory capabilities and a stronger high beam (20% brighter). Its exterior consists of military-spec level III anodized aluminum, extra-thick, hardened mineral glass lens and a deep diamond, anti-slip knurling pattern handle that includes a magnetic base for hands-free use.

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASICS

Thinking of enrolling in a higher-ed program? Do your homework with help from the NFOPU experts.

The world of academia exploded in scandal this year when news broke of celebrities and wealthy parents allegedly cheating the system to get their children admitted to Ivy League schools. Such stories can make college admissions sound like an ultra-competitive nightmare, but never fear. If you want to pursue a degree as a working professional, you'll find that most institutions — especially those tailored for adult learners, like the members of the National FOP University Consortium — recognize the demands of balancing school, work and family, and try to make the admissions process accessible and accommodating. Of course, it helps if you do a little studying of your own. Here, admissions officials and graduates guide you through the key steps along the path toward higher education.

1. Set Goals

Why do you want to earn a degree? How will education benefit your career? According to the Police Foundation, more than half of the nation's law enforcement agencies offer at least one incentive for continuing education,

such as mandating a degree for promotion or offering greater pay for a four-year degree. "I wanted to do something to not only advance in my current career, but also to make myself marketable after retirement from police work," says Jacob Morris of his decision to enroll in Ashland University for a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. The Lorain Police Department sergeant, a member of Ohio FOP Lodge #3, graduated in 2017 and has since completed a master's program at Bowling Green University.

This is the stage to determine the scope of your educational goals. Decide on type of degree, area of study and whether you want a specialized concentration within the field.

2. Research Schools

Degree programs differ in coursework and instructional formats. Some are taught exclusively online, others require in-person attendance and some provide a hybrid of the two. Ask yourself which arrangement will suit your study style as well as professional and personal demands.

"It is important they research the program

offerings, learning modalities, university support services and financing options available to determine the best fit for their individual needs," says Jamie Jaynes, vice president for admissions at the University of Maryland University College.

Also, it's advisable to stick with accredited institutions. "Regional accreditation is the highest level, and nationally accredited is a much lower standard," says Erik Fritsvold, Ph.D., professor of sociology and academic director for the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership master's degree program at the University of San Diego.

Next, study the curriculum. "Is it specifically designed to serve law enforcement, or is it masquerading as law enforcement-centric to attract students?" asks Fritsvold. "Make sure the skills and content have practical value."

Before finalizing your top choices, inquire whether previously earned credits, military service and/or work experience will transfer. "We evaluate many forms of nontraditional credit, including military training, certifications and learning evaluated by the American Council on Education, and various forms of public safety training. We also have a

Prior Learning Assessment program designed to evaluate learning gained while working, although transfer credit is not guaranteed and depends on the student's degree program," says Dennis Porter, senior law enforcement education coordinator for American Military University.

3. Calculate Finances

Higher education comes with a high price tag, so investigate financial resources. According to the Police Foundation, nearly 75% of agencies offer tuition reimbursement for work-related college courses. Approximately 30% reimburse for any college class. Be sure to read the fine print — some departments ask for proof of passing grades before releasing funds.

Have you served in the military? Per the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, post-9/11 veterans with at least 90 days of aggregate active duty are eligible for education benefits. Many universities have counselors or representatives well-versed in these details to guide applicants through the documentation.

Also, nontraditional undergraduate students may qualify for federal student aid, including grants that don't need repayment — graduate students can receive loans, but generally aren't eligible for grants. The application (info.ed.gov) period opens each October for the following academic year, and applicants submit data from the most recent tax return. Schools determine amounts based on need, accounting for nontraditional students' economic circumstances, including the number of dependents, employment status and even medical bills. Note that unsubsidized loans accumulate interest as soon as monies are dispersed; however, interest on subsidized loans is deferred while attending classes at least half-time. Terms of private loans vary.

"I took out student loans because I didn't want to work overtime to pay as I went. I thought that would be counterproductive," says Kenneth Ehrman, an investigator for the California Department of Motor Vehicles, vice president of California FOP Lodge #77 in Sacramento and sergeant at arms for the California State Lodge. Ehrman received a master's degree from the University of San Diego in 2017.

And, don't forget about scholarships, available based on criteria such as organization membership, ethnic and cultural heritage, and financial need.

"If you spend 10 hours finding a scholarship that lands you \$1,000, you just paid yourself \$100 per hour," notes Bernice Banning, director of graduate, online and adult admissions for Ashland University.

"The university awards a large number of scholarships once a year through a separate application process for Upper Iowa University students," notes Dawn Norak, assistant vice president for enrollment management for Upper Iowa University.

"Tiffin University also offers a long list of corporate partnerships, including discounts to FOP members. Other large discount programs include active military and their families, reserves and military retirees," says Nikki Hintze, executive director for online Enrollment Management for Tiffin University.

4. Apply

It's finally time to apply. Online forms are self-explanatory, but be prepared with names of schools and dates of attendance for previous studies. In most cases, working professionals will not have to provide ACT/SAT scores or take the Graduate Record Examination for online graduate programs. That said, institutions may mandate testing for course placement.

"There are much better tests to see where a person is at in two areas all majors require: English composition and mathematics. They will be tested to see where they are at and need to start," says Andrew Coggins Jr., assistant director of admissions for the University of Cincinnati.

Don't hesitate to contact an admissions counselor with questions.

"I never had a problem getting an answer. They were always available and eager to help," remembers Brian Meek of his application process for a master's degree in intelligence studies from the American Military University. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration diversion investigator is a member of Arizona FOP Lodge #14 and retired from the Phoenix Police Department in 2017.

5. Prep for Class

Incorporating coursework into an already busy life can be the hardest step of all.

"Because financial aid increases with the number of courses taken, many students



Kenneth Ehrman, California FOP Lodge #77



Brian Meek, Arizona FOP Lodge #14

attempt to take too many courses to maximize aid," says Porter. "They end up needing to drop courses, or worse yet, fail courses because they took too many at the outset. Being realistic with the time you can devote to your studies is absolutely vital to academic success."

Be sure to build a strong support network. Notify supervisors in case you need scheduling accommodations. Arrange a homework routine with family. Also, engage the formal services offered by the school.

"With the Admission Office and Advising Office working side by side, students at Tiffin University will have a go-to person every step of the way," says Hintze.

No doubt going back to school requires a big commitment of time, energy and resources; however, the return on investment can pay off throughout one's career, both in and out of law enforcement. **FOP**

For further insights from FOP members on the challenges and rewards of going back to school, visit fopconnect.com/education-connect



FOP President Testifies Before Congress; Support Grows for Social Security Fairness Act



As of this writing, Congress has just returned from a two-week October recess, which followed a six-week summer recess. Although there have been very few legislative days since the last issue of the *Journal*, we're pleased that we have considerable progress to report.

National President Yoes Makes His First Appearance Before Congress

Newly elected National President Patrick Yoes was invited to testify before the House Committee on the Judiciary oversight hearing on police practices. The hearing opened with brief testimony given by Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner, who then withdrew without answering any questions. The rest of the witness panel featured a majority of organizations and individuals that are very critical of law enforcement, like Reverend Al Sharpton of the National Action Network. You can view the entire hearing at <https://bit.ly/32Sgqz5>.

National President Yoes focused his testimony on the increase in ambush attacks on law enforcement and the dangers they pose to the men and women in uniform. He then called on the committee to favorably report H.R. 1325, the Protect and Serve Act, which would make it a federal offense to target a law enforcement officer with violence in certain limited circumstances. This same legislation was unanimously passed by the Committee on the Judiciary in the previous Congress, and then was passed by the full House on an overwhelming 382-35 vote. The legislation was not taken up by the Senate.

"It seems we have moved from a lack of support and respect for our police officers to outright animosity," National President Yoes told the committee. "We are public servants, not public enemies, and yet ambush attacks on law enforcement have

Just the Facts:

2x National President Patrick Yoes urged Congress to once again pass the Protect and Serve Act, legislation that would protect officers from ambush attacks. He also called for the passage of the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act, which would give the profession a better understanding of the pervasive issue of officer suicide. Additionally, the FOP has established a Public Safety Working Group to intensify advocacy for the Social Security Fairness Act.

been increasing for the last eight years. A recent study by the FBI concluded that in many cases, these attacks were motivated by a desire to hurt or kill a police officer.

"Congress needs to act to reduce this type of targeted violence by once again passing H.R. 1325, the Protect and Serve Act, introduced by Representatives Rutherford and Demings, the latter of whom is a member of this committee. Chief Demings, thank you for your service, for your steadfast support for our noble profession and for supporting this important legislation."

He also argued that the lack of respect for law enforcement officers has led to a lack of compliance during police-public interactions. This, in turn, leads to escalation and making the outcome of the interaction more dangerous to all involved parties.

"The changing attitudes toward law enforcement are not just endangering the men and women in law enforcement — they are triggering escalations in normal, everyday police-community interactions," Yoes said. "On any given day in America, there are over two million police-public interactions. When we interact with a member of the community who refuses to comply with the officer's directions, perhaps because of their perspective of police, the situation escalates.

"We in law enforcement are pushing

for more focus on de-escalation strategies, but we are encountering increased belligerence and uncooperativeness in some situations. This increases the risk of physical harm to the members of the community, the officer and innocent bystanders. It must stop — people must comply with an officer's reasonable directions. We expect our officers to adhere to certain policies and protocols when answering a call for service or interacting with the public, and we need

Top Priorities in Brief

H.R. 141/S. 521, the Social Security Fairness Act
House: 206 co-sponsors
Senate: 34 co-sponsors

H.R. 1195/S. 473, the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act
House: 46 co-sponsors
Senate: 5 co-sponsors

H.R. 1154/S. 1394, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act
House: 190 co-sponsors
Senate: 18 co-sponsors

— we depend upon — the cooperation of the citizens we protect."

In his testimony, National President Yoes told the committee these changed attitudes toward law enforcement are making it difficult for the profession to recruit and retain the "best and the brightest" officers. In addition, he said the physical and mental toll on the men and women in law enforcement has led to increased risks of mental health issues and suicides.

"Police officers see the very worst of humanity, with some statistics suggesting that a police officer will experience more traumatic events in six months than the average person will experience in a lifetime," Yoes said. "One in every five officers is subject to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can lead to deterioration of heart arterial health, hormonal imbalances and depression leading to suicide.

"First responders are five times more likely to experience PTSD and depression than civilians, and the number of suicides among law enforcement officers seems to be grossly under reported. In 2017, 140 police officers took their own lives.

In contrast, 46 officers died after being fatally shot in the line of duty that same year — nearly 67% less than the number of suicides."

He called on Congress to pass H.R. 3735, the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act, to get a better understanding of the challenges we face in addressing the issue of officer suicide.

National President Yoes concluded his testimony by stating that the FOP is ready to engage with anyone or any organization that is genuinely committed to improving policing in the United States, saying, "Working together to improve policing in our nation is critical to preserving our country and the American way of life."

FOP Establishes Public Safety Working Group on Social Security Fairness

Earlier this year, the National Legislative Office launched a targeted lobbying campaign to increase co-sponsorship for this legislation in both the House and Senate. As these efforts yielded significant progress, the Grand Lodge then established a

formal subcommittee on Social Security Fairness, which brought FOP leaders to Washington, D.C., to meet with members of Congress to advocate for the Social Security Fairness Act.

In consultation with the bill's sponsor, Representative Rodney L. Davis (R-Ill.), and one of its strongest supporters, Representative Garrett N. Graves (R-La.), the FOP has established a Public Safety Working Group to intensify this advocacy campaign. Current members of this working group include the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA), the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) and the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE). Together, we are hoping to build enough support for this legislation to move it through Congress.

FOP Expands on Social Media

In the last issue of the *Journal*, we discussed how the FOP, as the voice of our nation's law enforcement officers,

Continued on page 24 >

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WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 23

needs to continue to adapt in order to make our voices heard. Social media is a powerful tool that allows us to have direct, personal conversations with hundreds, if not thousands, of our members, potential members, supporters and opponents. We are proud to say that we have substantially increased our social media footprint by ramping up our efforts on Facebook and Twitter and have even launched the National FOP's Instagram account.

FOP Weekly Updates

We have revamped the FOP's *Washington Watch: Legislative Update* with a new look and expanded the accessibility by posting them on our social media platforms every Friday in addition to our traditional email distribution.

Believe "The Facts"

In an effort to push back against the anti-police rhetoric and false narratives, the FOP released our latest video, "The Facts," which offers the truth about policing. The video cites the findings of a recent study published in the National Academy of Sciences by the University of Maryland and Michigan State University entitled "The Truth Behind Racial Disparities in Fatal Police Shootings," which found that the numbers do in fact support our police:

- 95% of the subjects shot by police officers were actively attacking an officer or innocent civilians when they were shot by police.
- 99% of the subjects were armed with some type of weapon when they were shot by police.

The study concluded that the "race" of the subject and/or the officer did not play a role in any of the shootings. The video has been viewed nearly 200,000 times.

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

The FOP has launched the End of Watch campaign to honor our fallen brothers and sisters. Once we are alerted and confirm that one of our own has fallen in the line of duty, the FOP will post the fallen hero's picture, name, rank, department, state and end of watch date.

FOP Strong

It is important that we take an instrumental role in shaping the narrative

around the men and women who wear the badge. We are sharing numerous articles, stories and pictures on a daily basis to highlight the tremendous work of our members in their communities.

FOP on Facebook (@GLFOP)

To ensure consistency, the FOP changed its username to @GLFOP. Over the past month, we have gained nearly 8,000 new followers (70,846 total followers) and our Facebook content has reached well over two million people.

FOP on Twitter (@GLFOP)

Over the past month, we have gained over 500 new followers (19,300 total followers) and have reached nearly one million people.

FOP on Instagram (@FOPnational)

The FOP launched our new Instagram account on September 12 with the username @FOPnational. Within the first month, we have gained 1,030 followers and have posted 55 times.

Be a part of the FOP online community and share our content on your personal social media platforms! We also want to encourage our State and local lodges to share the National FOP's content to amplify our voice.

Support the PAC!

The National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC) plays an important role in the FOP's legislative advocacy strategy. The NFOP PAC allows the FOP to more effectively represent our members and advance our agenda on Capitol Hill. The FOP is the voice of our nation's law enforcement, so it is crucial we keep our PAC strong.

To do this, we are urging every FOP member in your lodge to make a donation and to consider becoming a monthly contributor. These contributions will help grow our PAC and amplify our voice in the legislative process. We also encourage lodges to consider participating in a payroll deduction program. Participating in this way can significantly grow our PAC.

To donate or learn more about participating in the NFOP PAC, contact Scott Marks at scott.marks@fop.net or call the National Legislative Office in Washington, D.C. **FOP**



Law Enforcement and Social Media

Just the Facts:

xx Social media is ubiquitous in today's culture and shows no signs of slowing down. For that reason, law enforcement officers need to be aware of the policies, laws and cases that affect what they can and cannot post online. On March 3-6, the National FOP will host the Labor and Legal Summit in Las Vegas to discuss in depth the relationship between law enforcement and social media along with other important issues affecting the profession.

Every year, the Labor Services Division receives multiple requests for research on various topics. However, one topic in particular has permeated the request line: social media in regard to law enforcement employment. These requests are often due to some form of discipline being imposed upon an officer as the result of a social media post. Subsequently, there has been an increase in wanting to know just how many professional implications can lie within an officer's personal social media page and whether these professional implications are an infringement on the officer's constitutional right to free speech.

The answer to these questions — like many answers pertaining to public employment law — is that it depends upon the situation. Determining whether a law enforcement officer's First

Amendment right has been violated is based upon two claims as set by the U.S. Supreme Court: freedom of association

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and freedom of speech. In order for a public employer to infringe upon freedom of association, the employee must prove that he or she was disciplined based upon their political beliefs and affiliation, as determined by *Eldred v. Burns* (1976). However, it must be noted that there is an exception to *Eldred*. If the public employee is employed in making policy decisions which are sanctioned by the electorate and these decisions involve issues where there is room for political disagreement or the employee is privy to conditional information, then the employee is subject to patronage dismissal, per *Sautz v. Haworth* (1990). What this means is that if an officer makes political claims on their personal social media page while they hold a position of governmental policy-making, they can be susceptible to termination or disciplinary procedures.

Moreover, a freedom of speech violation is just as caveat-dependent. *Cannick v. Myers* (1983) and *Pichering v. Board of Education* (1968) established the framework for whether an employee

is liable for what they say in relation to their public employment. Essentially, if an officer makes a social media post that results in their termination, he or she has had an infringement on their free speech

DETERMINING WHETHER A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT HAS BEEN VIOLATED IS BASED UPON TWO CLAIMS AS SET BY THE U.S. SUPREME COURT: FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

if they can prove three things:

- They were speaking on a matter of public concern
- The interest in the speech outweighed the government's interest in an orderly workplace
- The speech was a substantial factor in the termination decision

This established framework is beneficial in helping us better understand

what is and what is not appropriate for social media in relation to our workplace. However, it is important to keep in mind that there are just as many cases where the officer was found to be justifiably terminated and not within his or her First Amendment right as there are cases where the officer was found not to be justifiably terminated.

In today's culture, social media is ever present and it does not seem to be showing any signs of lessening. Because of that, we encourage law enforcement officers to be aware of the policies, laws and cases that affect what they can and cannot post on social media, as it could potentially implicate their employment. As we present this topic and many others, we invite you to attend our upcoming Labor and Legal Summit on March 3-6 in Las Vegas, where we will provide insight into these issues and more. For registration and more information, please contact labor@fop.net.

|| WRITE TO US: You can reach the Division of Labor Services at 201 Marriott Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37214, (615) 453-2711, or labor@fop.net.

For Pete's Sake

On Thursday, February 21 of this year, the FOP lost a renaissance man — Ralph Leon Byrne Jr., who we all knew as “Pete.” Brother Pete was a member of Amick-Baker-Kellems Lodge #156 in Scottsburg, Indiana.

Pete started his lifelong career of public service while in the Army, serving as an MP. He joined the Scottsburg Police Department in 1971 and retired as police chief 27 years later. He was affectionately known as “Officer Friendly” when participating in various children’s programs.

Upon his retirement, Pete moved to Indianapolis and began his second career as the security director for the Hoosier Lottery Commission. While in Indianapolis, he would spend most Sundays taking groups of homeless citizens to breakfast. He dedicated himself to people in need and would help anyone he came across. Pete would often say, “Caring is our business.” Following his tenure with the Lottery Commission, he retired to Venice, Florida.

In addition to holding several positions in his local lodge, Pete began serving with the Indiana State FOP in 1998 after being elected as Southeast District trustee, a position he held for four years. In 2002, he was elected State vice president and worked side-by-side with his longtime friend, State President Tim Downs. They worked together for 14 years and would normally be seen together at National Conferences and Board meetings across



Ralph Leon “Pete” Byrne Jr.

Brother Byrne was a member of various organizations such as the American Legion, VFW, Lions Club, Scottish Rite and Shrine Valley of Indianapolis, and he was a Scottsburg Mason. He loved Corvettes, sports and the FOP. Pete received the R. Pat Stark and Addie Maddox awards, both of which are among the highest awards that can be bestowed on an Indiana member of the Fraternal Order of Police.

Pete loved baseball, football and basketball, and he attended games at every opportunity. He liked horses... and betting on horses. At one time, he owned a share of a racehorse. He studied politics and worked hard for any candidate the FOP endorsed. Pete lived for the FOP and never stopped working relentlessly to make us a better organization.

He was a big part of many of our lives, especially Indiana FOP!

Rest in peace, Brother Pete.

Pete Byrne is survived by his sister Rhonda Burns and her husband, Joe, along with three nephews and seven great nieces and nephews.

I would like to thank Tim Downs and Leo Blackwell of the Indiana FOP for their assistance.

James Flores (New Mexico) is the chairman of the National FOP History Committee. The members of the committee are Dewey Sikes (Ohio), Adolph Smith (Alabama) and Mith Young (Maryland). #FOP

PETE LIVED FOR THE FOP AND NEVER STOPPED WORKING RELENTLESSLY TO MAKE US A BETTER ORGANIZATION.

the country, along with other FOP events. “Pete was the most loyal person I have ever had the pleasure to be associated with,” Downs stated.

For most of his adult life, Pete was a FOP icon. He was chairman of the Grand Lodge Site Committee at the time of his untimely death. He passed away in Las Vegas, Nevada, while conducting a site inspection for the 2023 Biennial FOP Conference. Ironically, our 2021 National Conference will be held in Indianapolis, and rightfully so.

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Looking Forward to the Legal Counselors Seminar

The 2020 National FOP Legal Counselors Seminar will be held on March 5-6 at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas. As we enter a new decade, our panels will include practitioners at the forefront of the varying legal issues facing law enforcement today. These legal professionals will present on diverse and informative topics. President Patrick Yoes will kick us off with an overview and update of our great organization.

Mike Coviello will present on the use — and misuse — of fitness-for-duty examinations, which have been on the rise in recent years. Mike's presentation will provide a general outline for officers

Just the Facts:

Save the date for the 2020 National FOP Legal Counselors Seminar on March 5-6 in Las Vegas. The seminar will cover a wide array of legal issues affecting law enforcement, including public records laws, arbitrations attacks on the qualified immunity doctrine, litigation and legislation regarding law enforcement recordings, crisis situations in use-of-force cases and much more.

who find themselves the subject of a fitness-for-duty examination and a guide to make sure departments are complying with the law. John Sauter will present on the timely topic of medical marijuana

and its impact on law enforcement in the workplace. As state laws change, officers must understand the overlap and conflict with federal law. John will share a recent arbitration decision related to medicinal

marijuana that impacted law enforcement and public-sector labor unions.

Gwen Callender and Mike Coviello will highlight issues in arbitrations involving police officers. This presentation will address all aspects of arbitration, from fact finding to discipline stages. Associate general counselors Rob Buchbinder and Chris Green will present on the qualified immunity doctrine. Their presentation titled "Protecting Qualified Immunity: An Overview of the Defense and Its Practical Application in an Ever-Changing Landscape" will spotlight the recent attacks on the doctrine, how circuit courts and the Supreme Court are applying the defense and the multiple forms qualified immunity may take. Rob and Chris will also address litigation and legislation relative to law enforcement recordings in their presentation titled "Smile, You're on Camera! The Use of Body Cameras, Dash Cameras, Drones, and Public and Private Recordings as Evidence." In today's world, officers are almost always being recorded via their own body camera, a private citizen's cellphone or storefront video camera. These recordings will often be sought as evidence to the benefit — or detriment — of the officer.

John Kautzman, Leo Blackwell and Andrew Duncan will deliver a presentation titled "Privacy Information of Police Officers and How to Protect It: The Ongoing Trend for Public Information Requests and the Department's Dilemma as to What and When to Release Such Information." Their presentation will provide an overview of the continuing

in detail the Legal Defense Plan and its importance as the frequency and cost of allegations rise. The plan is designed specifically to cover law enforcement exposure faced by members. Pat will explain logistics and purpose.

Finally, Lance LoRusso and General Counsel Larry James will cover all aspects of crisis situations in a use-of-force case, including subject matter, fact and expert witnesses to be called at the trial. Larry and Lance will address strategies for interacting with the press during that volatile time. The use-of-force standards are changing around the country. Larry and Lance will highlight key cases, legislation and standards separate from *Graham v. Connor*.

Director of Labor Services Tim Mullaney will be responsible for registering attorneys. Tim can be contacted at 88 Mary Anna Drive, Dover, Delaware 19901, by phone at (302) 270-8865 or by email at fopdis1@fop.net.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. **ROE**

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use of public records laws aimed at law enforcement, as well as best practices for departments. Pat Fioretto, general counsel for the FOP Legal Defense Plan, will provide a comprehensive overview of the Legal Defense Plan. His presentation "The Legal Plan: Nuts and Bolts Regarding Enrollment, Marketing Administrator, and Claims Administrators" will address



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The Auxiliary Is Ready to Work for You

The Grand Lodge Auxiliary's 39th Biennial Conference provided something for everyone. A number of presentations by various Auxiliary members gave delegates suggestions, insights and encouragement to introduce new ideas to the members in their auxiliary.

The Auxiliary's first Welcome to New Delegates event was well attended by our many first-time delegates as well as our members who are helping them get acclimated to our meetings.

Congratulations to the recipients of the following awards:

- **Subordinate Auxiliary of the Year** — River City, Kentucky, Lodge #614 Auxiliary
- **State Auxiliary of the Year** — Kentucky State Lodge Auxiliary
- **M. Michele Letz Merit Award** — Bonnie Stinson, Virginia State Lodge
- **Kathryn M. Milton Scholarships** — \$500; Cobb County, Georgia, Auxiliary; \$300; Chester County, Pennsylvania, Auxiliary

The Auxiliary Expo booth illustrated many of the projects and programs of the Auxiliary, and I hope you were able to visit the booth to learn more about us. We received several inquiries on initiating an auxiliary and will be following up on these requests for information.

Elections brought two new officers to the Executive Board — Terri Ijama from Tennessee was elected vice president, and Britney Holley from Texas was elected financial secretary. We welcome them both to the Board. Our appreciation is expressed to Sharri Daily as she leaves the Executive Board as vice president and to Florence Votava as she leaves the Executive Board as financial secretary. We thank them both for their dedication and commitment to the Grand Lodge Auxiliary.

The National officers elected for 2019-2021 are:

- President — Linda Hennie (Ohio)
- Vice President — Terri Ijama (Tennessee)
- Past President — Beverly Crump (Indiana)
- Financial Secretary — Britney Holley (Texas)
- Recording Secretary — Linda Martinez (New Mexico)
- Treasurer — Delores Green (Michigan)

- Second Vice President — Kristina Waters (Utah)
 - Sergeant at Arms — Julie Black (Indiana)
 - Chair of Trustees — Glenda Lehmann (Kentucky)
- The National trustees for 2019-2021 are:
- Alabama — Melanie Lanier
 - District of Columbia — Bonnie Cannon
 - Georgia — Ramona Stone
 - Illinois — Angie Haynes
 - Indiana — Michele Boytser
 - Kentucky — Glenda Lehmann
 - Michigan — Jeanne Apple
 - New Mexico — Denise Benavidez
 - North Carolina — Ally Michalec
 - Ohio — Susan Vargo
 - Oklahoma — Jennifer Dickson
 - Pennsylvania — Ann Cammerota
 - Tennessee — Valerie Green
 - Utah — Trista Salmon
 - Virginia — Bonnie Stinson

The Grand Lodge and our State and subordinate auxiliaries are ready to work for you. We are the wives, husbands, sons, daughters, parents, siblings and extended family members of your lodge. We are the frontline supporters of your law enforcement community. What impacts and involves you impacts and involves us. We have a vested interest in you, your job, your welfare and your lives. We would be pleased to talk with your lodge about forming an auxiliary. You can contact any of the above listed officers of the Auxiliary or reach the Auxiliary at the Grand Lodge FOP website, FOP.net, under the "About" tab, drop down "FOP Auxiliary." **FOP**

// **WRITE TO US:** Contact the National Auxiliary at lhennie@fop.com to learn more about opportunities to support law enforcement families.



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