

SHUTDOWN COMES TO AN END // P. 26

FOP



JOURNAL

THE VOICE OF OUR NATION'S
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS®

DECEMBER 2025

WWW.FOP.NET



'Tis the Season
*Wishing You a Happy
and Safe Holiday*

ALSO INSIDE

LOOKING AHEAD
TO 2026

LEADERSHIP MATTERS
REGISTRATION

A man wearing a dark cap and tactical gear is shown from the chest up, holding a Streamlight Wedge XT flashlight. He is using the flashlight to inspect a dark, tactical bag. The background is dark and out of focus. On the left side of the image, there is a vertical orange and black striped pattern.

STREAMLIGHT®

WEDGE® XT

500 LUMENS | TACTICAL TAIL SWITCH |
WATERPROOF | USB-C RECHARGEABLE

[STREAMLIGHT.COM/WEDGE-XT](https://streamlight.com/wedge-xt)
©2025 STREAMLIGHT, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

STREAMLIGHT®

FEATURES



16 // Blue Alert

Leveraging the Nation's Alert and Warning Systems

18 // Avoid the Trap

Budget Strategy Tips to Help Stay on Top of Expenses

WINNER OF A SUMMIT
CREATIVE AWARD



EXECUTIVE BOARD

6 // President's Message

Looking Back on 2025 With Pride ...

Moving Forward to 2026 With Purpose

8 // Secretary's Message

Counting Our Blessings

DEPARTMENTS

12 // FOP News

Halloween Spirit Fills the FOP Office

14 // Local Lodge News

Update from New Jersey

20 // Wellness

Choose Your Health in the New Year: Quitting Tobacco

22 // NFOPU Spotlight

University of the Cumberland

26 // Washington Report

Record-Setting Shutdown Comes to an End

29 // Labor News

NFOP Labor Services Division: Building a Stronger Future
for Law Enforcement Professionals

30 // Legal Counsel

The "Superhuman Cop" Standard and the Future of
Qualified Immunity

32 // Education and Outreach

Leadership Matters 2026 — Early Registration
Now Open



National 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: glfop@fop.net | www.fop.net

Executive Board

Patrick Yoes, President
Norco, LA | (504) 234-4300

Joe Gamaldi
Vice President
Houston, TX

Jimmy Holderfield
Secretary
Jacksonville, FL

James Smallwood
Treasurer
Nashville, TN

John Hoyt
Second VP
Philadelphia, PA

Steve James
Sergeant at Arms
Westminster, CA

Rob Pride
National Trustees
Chairman
Johnstown, CO

Past Presidents

Chuck Canterbury
Myrtle Beach, SC

John M. Dineen
Chicago, IL

Dewey R. Stokes
Columbus, OH

National Trustees

Colorado	Rob Pride, Chairman	Montana	Dan Ohl
Alabama	Jay King	Nebraska	John Francavilla
Arizona	Paul Sheldon	Nevada	David Moody
Arkansas	Kevin "Bart" Simpson	New Jersey	Kevin Vernon
California	Matt Heady	New Mexico	Robert Radosevich
Connecticut	Daniel DePinto	New York	Joseph Battaglia
Delaware	Joseph Wyka	North Carolina	Dennis McCrary
District of Columbia.....	Marinos Marinos	North Dakota	Joe Johnson
Florida	Michael Kelley	Ohio	Greg Toyas
Georgia	Jamy Steinberg	Oklahoma	Phil Wise
Idaho	Gregory Austin	Oregon	Todd Hargrove
Illinois	Robert "Rocky" Nowaczyk	Pennsylvania.....	John Fiorill
Indiana	Joe Hamer	Rhode Island	Louis Gianfrancesco
Iowa	Donald Strong	South Carolina	Terry Gainey
Kansas.....	Matthew Blassingame	South Dakota	Tony Harrison
Kentucky	Dave Mutchler	Tennessee	Johnny Crumby
Louisiana	Kelly Gibson	Texas	Kenneth Gardner
Maine	Mike Edes	Utah	Travis Brower
Maryland	Sherrice Carpenter	Vermont	Jimmy Baldea
Massachusetts	Rich Shailor	Virginia	John Ohrnberger
Michigan	Joe Adams	Washington	Jack Simington
Minnesota	Ruben Marichalar	West Virginia	Stephen Walker
Mississippi	Jake Driskell	Wisconsin	Jerry Johnson
Missouri	Kevin Ahlbrand	Wyoming	Ryan Cox

Editor-in-Chief Jimmy Holderfield

Editor Stephanie Simpson

911MEDIA Staff

Publisher Mark Deitch

Production Manager
Natasha Carleton

Senior Editor
Sophia Islas

Art Director
Chad Rooney

Graphic Designer
Richard Chu

Advertising Consultants
Adam James, Bruce Loria,
Heidi Wood-Brown

Client Services Director
Kelly Ross

Managing Editor
Jenna Anderson

Editor
Paul Amico

Senior Graphic Designer
Adam Huntington

Advertising Sales Manager
Leslie Lueders

Print and Digital Ad Coordinator
Sandra Diaz

911MEDIA
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

TNI

Published by 911MEDIA®

911MEDIA® is a division of Trade News International, Inc.

For advertising call 877-DIAL-911 (342-5911) | 911MEDIA.com

For editorial submissions, send inquiries to fopjournal@fop.net.

For product guide submissions, email your press release
and hi-res digital image to news@911media.com.



THE FOP JOURNAL is published monthly by the National 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.

The National Fraternal Order of Police Board of Trustees has contracted with the following vendors to offer services to our members. From time to time, these vendors may market by mail and electronically with the membership to offer services: Armed Forces Eyewear, Avis, Calibre Press, Commerce Bank, Enterprise Holdings, Inc., GovX, HALO/Lee Wayne Merchandise, Hylant Group, Liberty Mutual, Nationwide Advantage Mortgage, Rockwell Watches, Your Travel Experts and 911MEDIA®.

HOLIDAY LOAN

We have *money*
to **lend** now!®



Make your holidays more comfortable.

Borrow up to \$10,000

As low as **6.90% APR*** for up to 48 months

Limited Time Offer**

No payment
for up to 90 days***

Low Rate. No Fees.



Spend. Save. Borrow. Belong.
Apply Today

jfcu.org |     



*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Rate effective November 1, 2025. \$500 minimum loan amount. Example of repayment terms: 48 monthly payments of \$23.91 per \$1,000 borrowed. **Limited time offer: Offer ends December 31, 2025. Justice Federal reserves the right to cease this promotional offer at any time without notice to the membership. ***Interest will continue to accrue.
Federally Insured by NCUA



Looking Back on 2025 With Pride ... Moving Forward to 2026 With Purpose



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

As we approach the close of another year, it is meaningful to reflect on the extraordinary progress we have made together as the Fraternal Order of Police. Our strength as a national organization does not come from numbers alone, but from unity of purpose, clarity of mission and a shared commitment to support and defend the men and women who serve behind the badge. Throughout this year, we built upon our proud legacy while advancing efforts that ensure officers are recognized, respected, protected and supported.

Our successes in 2025 are real and historic. Among them, one stands above the rest: the passage of the Social Security Fairness Act, a decades-long fight that delivers long-overdue justice for countless retired officers and their families.

For years, our members paid into a system expecting fairness, only to face reductions or elimination of benefits they earned. We fought relentlessly, and we prevailed. This achievement was not luck, but the result of unity, persistence and strategic leadership.

This year also strengthened our national advocacy, credibility and relationships at the highest levels of government thanks to the extraordinary expertise of Executive Director Jim Pasco, whose experience and credibility in Washington remain invaluable to our mission.

We fostered a strong, direct and productive working relationship with the Trump administration, allowing for honest communication grounded in real-world experience. When National leadership wants clarity on how policy impacts law enforcement, they call the FOP. We are not simply in the room; we are at the table, shaping policy before it is written.

Our success has also been fueled by unmatched national media leadership, positioning the FOP as the strongest, clearest and most credible voice on the

realities facing American law enforcement. Across cable news, national networks, radio, podcasts, editorial outlets and digital platforms, we consistently deliver facts, truth and context. No one represents that mission more passionately than National Vice President Joe Gamaldi, whose relentless media advocacy and fearless, data-driven messaging ensure the public hears the truth, not the false narratives painted by critics.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without a dedicated and unified leadership team. I am proud of our National Executive Board, our National directors and our professional staff whose

***Our successes in 2025
are real and historic.
Among them, one stands
above the rest: the
passage of the Social
Security Fairness Act.***

commitment makes our work possible. This includes Director of Labor Services Roger Mayberry, whose leadership, labor guidance and collective bargaining support continue to strengthen our national labor posture and ensure officers receive fair treatment and strong representation.

Our commitment to officer wellness and family support remains a top priority because the emotional, physical, psychological and cultural demands placed on today's officers are unlike anything seen in previous generations. We have continued breaking down stigma and strengthening support systems through

research-driven wellness strategies, expanded peer support and leadership-level education on trauma-informed care. Under the extraordinary leadership of Sherri Martin, our director of Wellness Services, and through ongoing collaboration with national partners, we are changing the culture of resiliency in policing to ensure that no officer, and no family, carries the invisible weight of service alone. It is no longer enough to train officers **how to serve**; we must ensure they are supported to **survive the service**, making this effort a core pillar of our mission moving forward.

Additionally, one of our most important long-term investments has been in professional development. Thanks to Director of Education and Outreach Keith Turney, our educational mission has evolved into a modern, innovative program that prepares members not only to serve, but to lead. His efforts continue to elevate training quality, accessibility and relevance.

I remain humbled and deeply aware of the responsibility that comes with the confidence you have placed in me as your National president. Your trust and partnership are never taken for granted, and serving alongside you remains one of the greatest honors of my life.

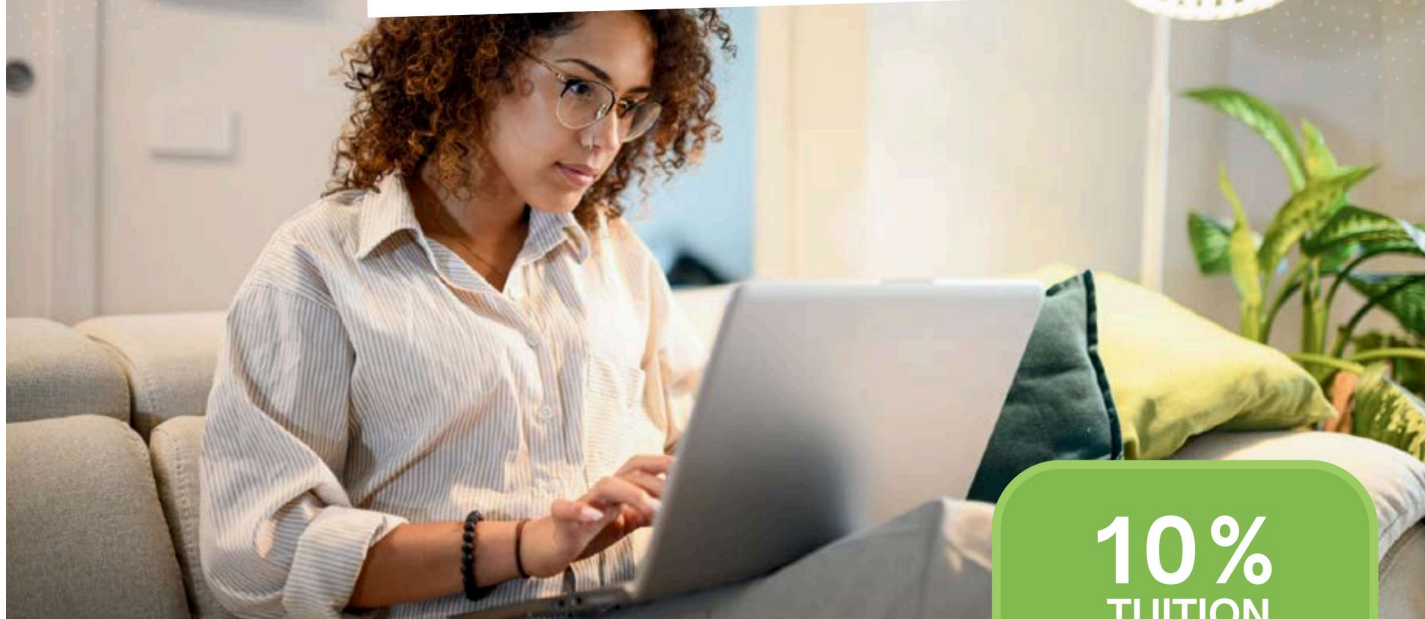
As we enter 2026, I am encouraged by the opportunities ahead. We will continue to expand our advocacy, strengthen our professional development, build resilience and restore truth and respect to our profession. No matter the challenge, the Fraternal Order of Police stands ready, informed, united, strategic and unwavering.

During this season of reflection, may we find pride; in this season of family, may we find peace; and in this season of hope, may we find renewed purpose.

From my family to yours, Merry Christmas, and may the new year bring health, prosperity and renewed strength. **FOP**

YOUR EDUCATION GOALS

START WITH CCU!



**10%
TUITION
DISCOUNT***

Law Enforcement Employees
Government Employees
Firefighters
Military
Corporate Partners



OUR PROGRAMS

- Business
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- General Studies
- Psychology
- Health Care Administration
- Homeland Security
- Human Resource Management
- Organizational Leadership

- ✓ **100% Online**
- ✓ **Self-Paced**
- ✓ **Affordable**

Accredited by:



*Tuition discount applies to law enforcement, firefighters, military, government employees, and corporate partners enrolling after Jan. 2025. Offer is not retroactive for students already enrolled. Discount is subject to change and/or cancellation at any time without notice. This offer cannot be combined with any other discount(s).

 (888) 288-8648

 CALCOAST.EDU

 ADMISSIONS@CALCOAST.EDU

 925 N. SPURGEON ST.,
SANTA ANA, CA 92701



Counting Our Blessings

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

Brothers and sisters, I hope you are doing well and preparing for the holiday season. This is the time of year that we count our blessings and give thanks for all we have, especially the joy we share with our families. Take the opportunity to spend time with your family and let them know how much they are appreciated. As law enforcement officers, we face many daily challenges, be it long work hours, answering “back-to-back” calls for service, dealing with unreasonable citizens, inadequate sleep and poor eating habits. Our families are our foundation in comforting us and being there when everything around us seems to be broken. Give them a hug and let them know how grateful you are for their support.

2025 has been an amazing year. Looking back, on January 5, President Biden signed into law the historic Social Security Fairness Act. This major piece of legislation righted a 40-year wrong that negatively impacted many of our members and their spouses. Two weeks later, we saw our endorsed candidate for president of the United States, Donald J. Trump, sworn in as the 47th U.S. president. Immediately, we experienced an open door to the administration. In the past year, President Trump has invited the FOP rank-and-file

leadership to meet with him twice at the White House.

Analyzing that we have outgrown Leadership Matters being hosted in Nashville and the desire to consolidate training, such as labor and legal, along with the desire to expand our educational offerings, we decided on a new location in Las Vegas for 2026. Retirements of veteran senior staff members in the National Office allowed for the advancement or position changes of other staff members, including a new office manager, executive assistant

the new membership database system, Association Anywhere.

We have experienced issues, but they are being addressed and fixed. A project of this magnitude is going to have glitches. Our internal IT staff, along with our Membership Department and our IT consultants, Mr. Mark Hong and Mr. Steve Kim, have worked tirelessly on fixing the problems and helping the various local and State Lodges navigate through the system. Our goal is to make this system the best, but it's going to take some time.

We have also seen a change in the public's attitude toward the police in a positive way. We have seen a reduction in officers being killed, though it's still not acceptable. We have seen recruitment become more attractive, and we have seen wages increase. We received a \$1.5 million grant from the Department of Homeland Security to develop training. More information will be forthcoming. Yes, 2025, overall, was a great year. Right now, we are making plans to hit 2026 “head on” with exciting new advances to the Order. Can we count on your continued help and support?

Per capita season is in full swing and is now due. As a matter of information, per capita is due for every active member. Even if a lodge bestowed the honor of “retired” or “lifetime” on a member, per capita is due. A local or State Lodge may waive dues for retired or lifetime members, but no such waiver is granted at the National level. From time to time, I am contacted by a retired or lifetime member asking why they can't order merchandise, receive the *Journal* or *Washington Watch*, or get the NFOP app. The reason is that

***In the past year,
President Trump has
invited the FOP rank-
and-file leadership to
meet with him twice
at the White House.***

to the National secretary, accounts receivables, membership, reception and IT. These changes came with a learning curve, but it also spawned new ideas and renewed enthusiasm.

Our National Biennial Conference was met with major behind-the-scenes issues, but in the end, it turned out to be one of the best conferences in history. One of the highlights was the four-day stage production, which was centered on making the event more engaging to our delegates. Immediately after the Conference, we rolled out

UPCOMING EVENTS



PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE
MARCH 29–APRIL 3, 2026
South Point Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, NV

Registration now open!

Continued on page 10 >

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

Inpatient and Intensive Outpatient Treatment for First Responders

First Responder Wellness is an employee retention tool exclusively for public safety professionals to treat post-traumatic stress, alcohol, addiction, anxiety, depression. Review our offerings below and reach out for more information on how we return employees to work faster and healthier.



WHAT WE TREAT

Post-Traumatic Stress

Addiction

Alcohol

Anxiety

Depression

An alcohol or substance abuse problem is NOT required to enter our program.

OUR PROGRAMS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Detox

Residential

Intensive Outpatient

Online Intensive Outpatient

After Care

Family Program

WHY AGENCIES NATIONWIDE TRUST FIRST RESPONDER WELLNESS

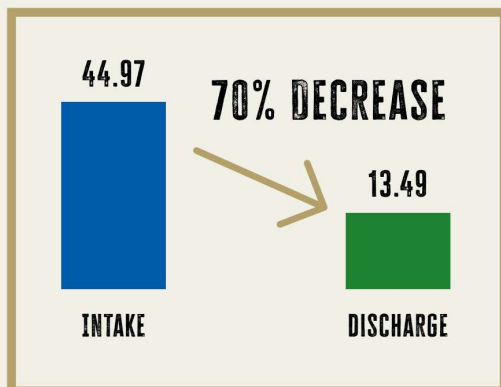
- 94% return to work rate
- We hold the title of a vetted and approved treatment program by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).
- We work with partners at more than 500 agencies across the country.
- We have provided treatment to over 1,900 public safety professionals since 2018.
- Our culturally competent staff works exclusively with first responders.
- Program curriculum is developed specially for public safety.
- Most insurance plans and workers' comp are accepted.

"I had a seamless experience referring a member to First Responder Wellness. The staff was incredibly supportive and fantastic to work with throughout the entire process. It's the only treatment facility I would confidently recommend to our members."

Marco Monteblando,
Executive Director
Washington State FOP

To schedule a tour of our program or to get more information please reach out to Jeff McGreevy, Public Safety Advocate, Retired Sergeant and Peer Support Lead at jeff.mcgreevy@frhealth.com

AVERAGE PCL-5 (PTSD) SCORE AT ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE



Updated 4-1-2025.

VALIDATED OUTCOMES

Our clients PCL-5 (PTSD) scores on average show a 70% reduction from admission to discharge. More about the PCL-5 below.

- A score of 38 or higher is enough for a provisional diagnosis of PTSD.
- Total score of 31 or higher suggests the client may benefit from PTSD treatment.
- A 5-10 point decrease represents a reliable change (i.e. change not due to chance).
- First Responder Wellness clients see an average PCL-5 reduction of over 31 points, which is significant.



844-620-7570

WWW.FRHEALTH.COM

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 8 >

the local lodge has not paid the required per capita for the member to National, and therefore, the member has been dropped as an active member. A member receiving the honor of "retired" or "lifetime" should ascertain from their local lodge secretary if the lodge will be paying their per capita to their State and the National Lodges, and if not, how they need to make payment to stay active. Payments to the National Lodge must be paid through the local and State Lodges and cannot be received directly by National from an individual.

If your lodge recently had lodge officer elections — many lodges do in November and December — make sure the lodge secretary sends in an updated lodge officer roster. Even if there were no changes in officer positions, an updated roster is needed. Why? Because for security reasons, the membership database is programmed to not allow access to the system based on the officer's expiration of the term of office. Especially during per-capita time, a

secretary's worst nightmare is to get locked out of the system.

I'd like to address Association Anywhere, the new membership database system. As I have mentioned,

***As I have mentioned,
we are working
through some of the
glitches local and
State secretaries and
their authorized users
have experienced.***

we are working through some of the glitches local and State secretaries and their authorized users have experienced. I understand the

frustration many have encountered, but be assured, the staff and I are committed to making the system meet the needs of our members. This project began four years ago and is a work in progress. We are going to discover issues that we didn't anticipate, and we also know that AA is totally different from the old VUE system.

Managing the new program is going to take continuing education, development and time. I appreciate everyone's patience and willingness to work together. Should you experience a problem or you have a need for the system to do what it's not doing, shoot me an email with a detailed description. I will review and get it to the most appropriate staff member to address.

In closing, thank you for all you do for the Order. It's an absolute pleasure to serve you as your National secretary. My staff and I stand ready to assist you in any way we can. Have a great Christmas, Hanukkah or Happy holidays! Above all, be safe out there, and I look forward to seeing you or speaking with you soon. **FOP**



**BLUE VIEW**

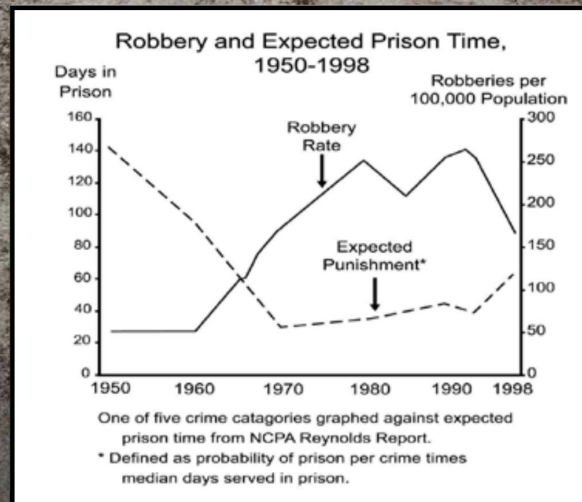
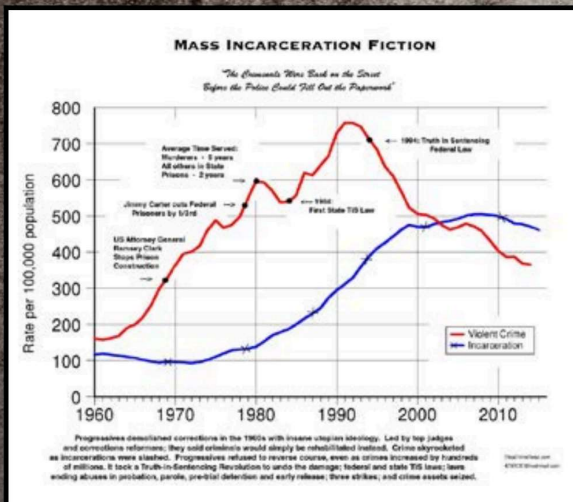
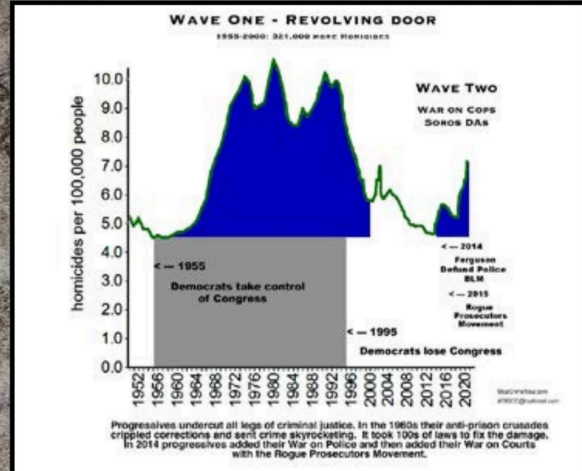
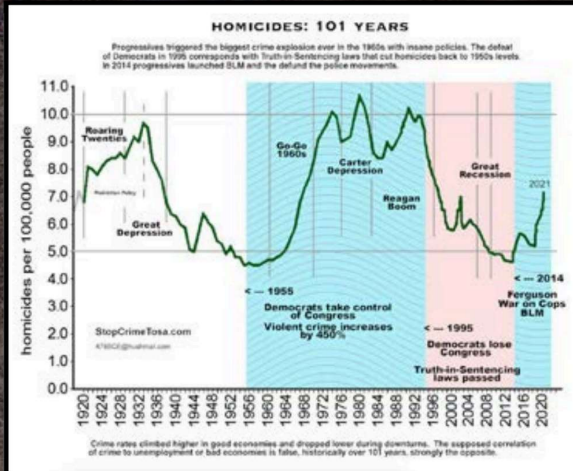
TUNE IN TO THE FOP PODCAST

Listen in every week to hear from law enforcement experts, elected officials and other notable leaders to gain insight into the issues and current events surrounding the law enforcement community.

Available now on FOP.net, FOP's YouTube channel, Apple, Google, Spotify and Amazon Music.

CRIME HISTORY in GRAPHS

A resource for criminal justice professionals, law enforcement and anyone concerned about high crime



STOPCRIMETOSA.COM
History & Graphs



Halloween Spirit Fills the FOP Office

The National Staff took a break from working for some Halloween fun, friendship and a touch of movie magic! The team gathered in the conference room to watch *Hocus Pocus*, complete with popcorn and other movie treats. It was a great way to unwind, share some laughs and enjoy each other's company. Thanks to everyone who joined in and helped make the afternoon so spooktacular! **FOP**



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!

We need to increase member participation in our payroll deduction and monthly recurring credit card programs. Please help us advocate on your behalf and do so with the resources needed to be effective. Help us grow our PAC and amplify our voice in the nation's capital.



Scan to Sign Up
and Donate to
the FOP PAC Fund

INFINITY[®]

MASSAGE CHAIRS

Enhance Wellness with an Infinity Massage Chair



Many departments use funding from their local Fraternal Order of Police—ask yours today to make this wellness upgrade possible.



“We love the chair. I’ve used it a few times myself, and it absolutely makes a difference. It’s a great addition for our team.”

— Detective Lieutenant Jose Tovar, Sparta Police Department

Massage Benefits That Support Officer Wellness:

- Stress Relief
- Pain Management
- Improved Circulation
- Faster Recovery from Physical Strain
- Enhanced Focus and Alertness
- Better Sleep Quality

*Special pricing available for police departments,
active duty and retired officers!*



Learn how to add a massage chair to your wellness program

Your Rep: Jason Drinkwater

603-910-5236 | jdrinkwater@infinitymassagechairs.com

SCAN TO
SCHEDULE A
MEETING

NEW JERSEY

2025 TCS New York City Marathon

SECRETARY VALERIE BLASKEWICZ /
NJ LODGE #93

Brother Troy Stienstra and Brother Pedro Escarate made NJIT FOP Chapter #93 proud as they crossed the finish line at the 2025 TCS New York City Marathon! It was the first marathon for both officers. While both are avid runners in their spare time, it's still an impressive feat considering they began marathon training only two months prior.

Brother Stienstra finished with a time of 5:19:17 (pace 12:11, Bib #65009) and Brother Escarate finished with a time of 4:52:17 (pace 11:09, Bib #65008). The two ran side by side for much of the race, keeping each other focused, motivated and determined all the way to the finish line.

FOP #93 members followed their progress throughout the day on the NYRR tracking site, cheering them on virtually as they made their way through all five boroughs of New York City. Their commitment, discipline and teamwork exemplify the brotherhood/sisterhood and perseverance that define NJIT FOP #93. Congratulations to both brothers on this incredible achievement! **FOP**







Blue Alert

LEVERAGING THE NATION'S ALERT AND WARNING SYSTEMS
TO PROTECT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN BLUE

MEL MAIER / APCO CEO



Earlier this year, Jared Timbrook, a police officer in Lee's Summit, Missouri, responded to a domestic disturbance and was shot four times while chasing a suspect on foot. Thankfully, Officer Timbrook survived and has since returned to light duty while he continues to recover. Also, fortunately, the suspect was apprehended thanks to a tip from a witness who saw a Blue Alert about the incident and contacted police.

Blue Alerts are used to quickly disseminate information to law enforcement agencies, the media and the public about violent criminals who have killed, seriously injured or pose an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement. The majority of states have Blue Alert plans — state plans that set the criteria and procedures for issuing Blue Alerts — to help apprehend these offenders. That is great progress, but we must do more to help protect our dedicated law enforcement officers who run headfirst into danger to keep our families and neighborhoods safe, just as Officer Timbrook did.

History of Blue Alerts

In 2015, Congress passed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, named in honor of two fatally ambushed New York City Police Department officers. The law establishes a voluntary nationwide system for the warning of threats against law enforcement officers and

locating suspects. The Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, or COPS Office, oversees implementation of the law, helping states and law enforcement agencies establish effective plans for issuing Blue Alerts and integrating these plans across the country.

Similar to AMBER Alerts, Blue Alerts may be transmitted through the Emergency Alert System to television and radio, through the Wireless Emergency Alert system to consumer cellphones and through other means such as highway message signs. The Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Emergency Management Agency play a central role in enabling the delivery of Blue Alerts across these platforms. The alerts galvanize public attention and generate media coverage with information on how to identify dangerous suspects and what action to take if you encounter them.

In the case of the assault on Officer Timbrook, a Blue Alert was issued in Missouri and later extended to Kansas. A witness who saw the Blue Alert on social media recognized the suspect and contacted law enforcement, which led to his apprehension just two days later.

Blue Alert Plans

Blue Alert plans are intended to ensure timely, coordinated communication when an officer is attacked or threatened and should be part of any comprehensive approach for

apprehending violent suspects. With a plan in place, government agencies are prepared and ready to take action. The COPS Office provides guidance and assistance on drafting and strengthening Blue Alert plans, including activation criteria, how to request an alert, how to write an effective alert, the geographic scope of alerts, protocols to facilitate interstate coordination, officer privacy protection and more. Authorities that issue Blue Alerts, typically a state agency, should have an easy-to-understand process for law enforcement agencies to request an alert and clear protocols to follow. Blue Alerts may be issued when there is actionable information about a suspect (such as their name, physical description or vehicle description) and when a law enforcement officer is killed, seriously injured or missing, or there is an imminent and credible threat to a law enforcement officer.

Because suspects may flee to other states, it is important for Blue Alert plans to be developed with interstate coordination in mind. The COPS Office, through its National Blue Alert Network, provides a framework to promote consistent and interoperable Blue Alert plans nationwide and can serve as a resource for identifying alerting officials in other states.

Next Steps

If your jurisdiction does not have a Blue Alert plan, I encourage you to reach out to the COPS Office (cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert). They offer resources and technical

assistance at no cost to state, territorial, tribal and local agencies that want to create Blue Alert plans. They can also review existing plans and provide feedback to enhance the plans and ensure compliance with the voluntary guidelines.

As a former police officer who rose through the ranks to the position of captain, as well as a former director of 9-1-1 operations in the Oakland County, Michigan, Sheriff's Office, I know firsthand how critical it is to protect our law enforcement community. Last year alone, 342 law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty. Tragically, 50 of these officers died. By creating a nationwide Blue Alert Network, along with the training and readiness to use these alerts, we can support the safety of our law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve.

About the Author

Mel Maier is the CEO and executive director of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), the world's oldest and largest organization of public safety communications professionals, and represents APCO on the COPS Office's Blue Alerts advisory group. APCO has long championed the implementation of Blue Alerts, actively participating in support of their adoption before the Federal Communications Commission. Before joining APCO, Maier served for more than three decades as a law enforcement officer. FOP

FOP CONTINUES SUPPORT FOR THE BLUE ALERT PROGRAM

Editor's note: The Fraternal Order of Police participates in Blue Alert. Thanks to a \$150,000 federal grant, the FOP can continue to support the Blue Alert program, which helps quickly notify the public when officers are in danger. Inspired by the tragic loss of Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, Blue Alerts are sent out via TV, radio, texts and highway signs, ensuring swift action and community support in critical situations. This grant will allow the FOP to enhance the program, expanding its reach to more law enforcement agencies, states and territories, ensuring the safety of officers nationwide.



Budgeting Trap Months

NICK DAUGHERTY / FINANCIALCOP, LLC, OWNER AND PRESIDENT

Editor's note: This month, we know that many of our members will be focused on their financial health in this holiday season. We wanted to share this article from Nick Daugherty, owner and president of FinancialCop, LLC. Through a partnership with the National FOP, FinancialCop has provided special resources to all FOP members. Find all of your FinancialCop member benefits at tinyurl.com/ymrepu4f.

Monthly Budgeting in Trap Months: Don't Let These Things Wreck Your Financial World!

Life throws financial surprises at us all year round, but certain times of the year are notorious for being “trap months” — those months when expenses sneak up on us and derail our budgets. Whether it's the holiday season, back-to-school time, months with extra weeks or even summer vacation months, these periods can wreck your financial world if you're not prepared. Let's look at how to identify

these trap months and then how to create a budget strategy to stay ahead.

What Are Trap Months?

Trap months are those specific times when regular expenses are amplified by seasonal or irregular costs. Common examples include:

- **December:** Holiday shopping, travel and festive gatherings
- **August and September:** Back-to-school shopping, tuition fees and extracurricular signups
- **June and July:** Summer vacations, weddings and increased utility bills due to the heat
- **March and April:** Tax payments and

- **October/November and March/April:** If you have young kids, these months can be like being in birthday party Armageddon!
- **August and January:** Another trap month with kids if they play sports with fees due around these times

These months can feel overwhelming if your financial plan doesn't account for these seasonal spikes.

What To Do When You're in a Trap Month

1. **Review past spending patterns.** Look back at your bank statements from previous years to identify which months consistently lead to overspending. This retrospective analysis will help you pinpoint your personal trap months. This can change in different phases of your life (for instance, when you have kids, nearing or after retirement, buying a new home, etc.)
2. **Set up a sinking fund.** A sinking fund is a savings account earmarked for predictable expenses (remember the old days of the "Christmas savings club at your banks.") Start contributing to it monthly, even if it's just a small amount, so you're ready when those larger bills roll in.
3. **Prioritize essential expenses.** During trap months, distinguish between needs and wants. Stick to the essentials and avoid impulse purchases. Remember to make that "ops plan" before the month begins to better estimate what your monthly expenses may look like for that month.
4. **Plan for irregular expenses.** Many trap month costs are predictable if you plan ahead. For example, save for holiday shopping throughout the year. Christmas comes each year on December 25 and it's never too early to prepare for next year now. Anticipate back-to-school costs by creating a list early and shopping sales. Book travel months in advance to lock in lower rates.
5. **Leverage discounts and rewards.** Shop sales, use coupons or

Many trap month costs are predictable if you plan ahead. For example, save for holiday shopping throughout the year.

consider secondhand options for items like school supplies or holiday gifts. Fun fact — did you know a large chunk of millionaires still use coupons!

6. **Communicate and set boundaries.** Let friends and family, and especially your spouses, if your married, know your financial goals.

Tools to Help You Stay on Track

- **Budgeting apps:** Everydollar, YNAB (You Need a Budget) and Monarch can help you track spending and stick to your plan.
- **Savings challenges:** Try challenges like the 52-week savings challenge to build your fund gradually.
- **Automatic transfers:** Schedule automatic transfers to your sinking fund or savings account each payday. Remember, sometimes it's best to pay yourself first!

avoid financial stress and continue building toward your long-term goals.

Budgeting doesn't mean sacrificing enjoyment; it's about striking a balance. One of my favorite quotes is from Dave Ramsey. "If you live like no one else, later on in life you get to live like no one else!" A little bit of sacrifice now can lead to not having to sacrifice later. Plan wisely, spend intentionally and remember — you're in control of your finances, even in the trickiest months of the year.

About FinancialCop

FinancialCop is dedicated to helping individuals take charge of their finances with practical, actionable advice from recruit to retiree. From budgeting tips to long-term wealth-building strategies, to full-on financial planning and investment management, we're here to ensure you stay financially fit year-round. FOP

Don't Let Trap Months Derail Your Goals

The key to navigating trap months is preparation and awareness. By identifying potential pitfalls and proactively planning for them, you can



CHOOSE YOUR HEALTH IN THE NEW YEAR: QUITTING TOBACCO

As a new year approaches, there's no better time to make a change that can truly transform your health. If you use tobacco or nicotine, quitting is one of the most powerful steps you can take for your heart and brain health.

How Tobacco Affects Your Heart and Brain

Tobacco and nicotine products don't just harm your lungs — they strain your entire cardiovascular system. Smoking or vaping increases your blood pressure, reduces oxygen in your blood and damages the walls of your arteries, making it harder for your heart to work properly. These same effects can lead to reduced blood flow to the brain, raising the risk for stroke and cognitive decline over time.

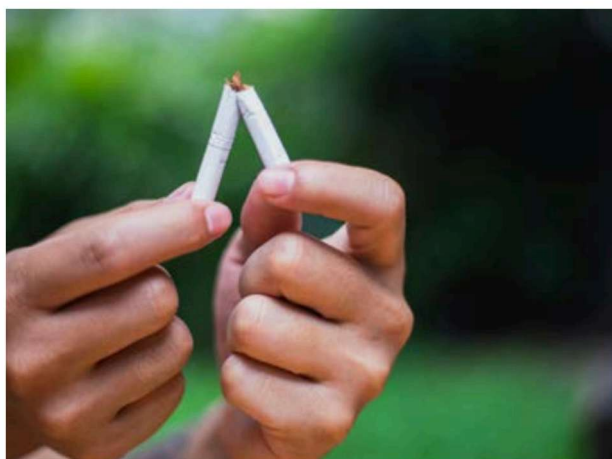
Start With a Plan

Quitting can be challenging, but it's absolutely possible — and every step counts. Here are a few practical tips inspired by Life's Essential 8™ (tinyurl.com/nv5jjjxw) to help you get started:

1. **Know your reason.** Write down **why** you want to quit and keep it visible as motivation.
2. **Set a quit date.** Choose a realistic date and start preparing now.
3. **Find support.** Talk to your doctor, join a support group or use free quit resources.
4. **Replace the habit.** Keep busy with healthy alternatives — chew sugar-free gum, take a walk or sip water.
5. **Manage stress.** Try deep breathing, journaling or light exercise to handle cravings.
6. **Celebrate progress.** Every day without tobacco is a win — track your success and reward yourself.
7. **Stay active and eat well.** Moving more and eating nourishing foods help your body heal faster.
8. **Don't give up.** Slips can happen — what matters most is getting back on track.

Your Future Self Will Thank You

Every tobacco-free day improves your health, energy



and confidence. Within weeks, your blood pressure lowers, your circulation improves and your body begins to repair itself. By making quitting tobacco a resolution in the new year, you're not just breaking a habit — you're choosing a stronger heart, a clearer mind and a healthier life. **FOP**

Take charge of your health today! Scan the QR code to explore more tools that can help you track your health, set goals and stay strong — for the job and beyond.

The American Heart Association and the National Fraternal Order of Police are proud to collaborate to improve the cardiovascular health and overall well-being of law enforcement officers.



(800) AHA-USA-1 | heart.org



The FOP Store

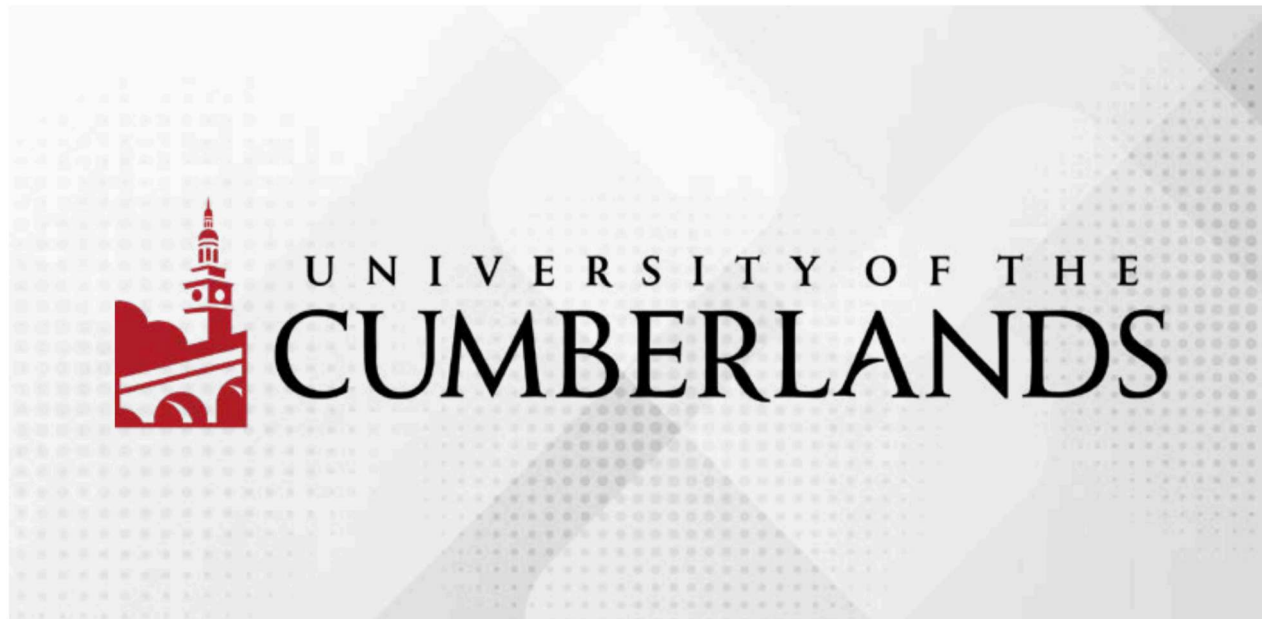
Perfectly Gifted. Proudly Worn.



www.thefopstore.com



University of the Cumberland



The vision of University of the Cumberland is to be a university of distinction that encourages professional and intellectual growth in a student-focused community.

University of the Cumberland is proud to support members and families of the Fraternal Order of Police. We have partnered with the National FOP University to offer members and their families exceptional academic programs that are structured to be among the most affordable in the nation. FOP members can apply to University of the Cumberland free of charge. All transfer credit evaluations and transfer credit awards are also free of charge to FOP members and their families.

The University of the Cumberland, a regionally accredited university, offers online and on-ground associate and bachelor's degrees in criminal justice, and an online Master

of Science in Justice Administration degree to criminal justice practitioners and recent college graduates.

The **criminal justice bachelor's degree** program from University of the Cumberland can help you prepare for a career in criminal justice or help you advance your criminal justice career. Our criminal justice courses are designed to enhance students' ability to communicate and practice effectively on the job with clients and colleagues, so they may pursue lives of responsible service and leadership.

UC's accomplished faculty teach our criminal justice classes and help you to enhance your understanding of the roles of society and law enforcement in response to unlawful behavior in diverse environments. Students will also strengthen critical thinking skills by fostering an understanding of criminal conduct and behaviors, and by clarifying personal values related to working with lawbreakers.

UC's criminal justice bachelor's courses include, but are not limited to:

- Policing
- Probation and Parole
- Juvenile Justice
- White Collar Crime

Developed by law enforcement professionals for law enforcement professionals, **our online Master of Science in Justice Administration degree is ranked top 10 in the nation** by U.S. News & World Report.

The curriculum is planned with an awareness of the academic preparation and the applied learning needed for students to successfully pursue leadership roles in the field. The online master's degree program builds upon UC's long tradition of community service and our commitment to ethical leadership. The online master's degree program provides opportunities for rural and local criminal justice agency personnel to interact with other professionals employed in criminal

justice administration positions throughout the nation and also allows students to gain a firsthand perspective of how larger agencies operate, including state and federal authorities. **Numerous transfer credit pathways are available for students who possess qualifying prior learning experiences.**

The faculty leading our online Master of Science in Justice Administration degree program have extensive field experience and are aware of the risks and pressures faced by personnel in the field. Many of our online master's faculty currently work in the criminal justice field, and many have also served their country with honor as members of the United States military. They are committed to working with non-traditional students in UC's Master of Science in Justice Administration online degree program by allowing students to work, study and interact with faculty as permitted by the students' professional schedules.

The online Master of Science in Justice Administration degree offers core areas of study, including but not limited to criminological theory, ethical issues in justice administration, legal issues, human resource management and leadership fundamentals. Upon completing all core requirements, students choose an emphasis area within their online master's degree program with the following options:

- Law Enforcement
- Cybersecurity
- Digital Forensics
- Criminal Psychology
- Homeland Security
- Juvenile Justice
- Corrections
- Addiction Studies
- CJ Education and Leadership

Continued on page 24 >

The National Fraternal Order of Police University

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

FOP.net/fop-university.



Charles Town, WV



Ashland, OH



Orange Beach, AL



Romeoville, IL



San Diego, CA



Manchester, NH



Tiffin, OH



Cincinnati, OH



Arlington, VA



Adelphi, MD



San Diego, CA



Williamsburg, KY



Fayette, IA



Minneapolis, MN



Wichita, KS

FOP.net/fop-university

NFOPU SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 23 >

The commitment of University of the Cumberlands to criminal justice students extends to include students interested in our online graduate-level **criminal justice management certificate (12 credit hours)** and our online doctorate degree in **leadership** with an emphasis in criminal justice.

University of the Cumberlands is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist and doctorate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of University of the Cumberlands may be directed in writing to the SACSCOC at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).



Undergraduate Online Admissions

649 S. 10th Street Suite C
Williamsburg, KY 40769
Phone: (606) 539-4390
Toll-free: (800) 343-1609 x4390
Email: ucoadm@ucumberlands.edu

Graduate Admissions

649 S. 10th Street Suite C
Williamsburg, KY 40769
Phone: (606) 539-4390
Toll-free: (855) 791-7199
Email: gradadm@ucumberlands.edu **FOP**

WELLNESS PROVIDERS

Chateau Recovery Midway, UT

chateaufirstrecovery.com/first-responders

FHE Health: Shatterproof Program Deerfield Beach, FL

fhetherapy.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

Throttle and Thrive Palos Verdes Estates, CA

throttleandthrive.com

Warrior's Heart Bandera, TX

warriorsheart.com

Find more vetted and approved wellness providers
and programs at fop.net/officer-wellness/providers.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE



800-341-6038 | foplegal.com



Same Commitment. Evolving Protection.

The legal landscape for law enforcement continues to change — unfortunately causing us to adjust plan rates. Starting January 1, 2026, updated plan pricing will take effect.

While the cost is changing, our mission remains the same:
to be your shield when you need it most.



Visit foplegal.com to view the new rates and ensure your protection continues without interruption.



Record-Setting Shutdown Comes to an End



On November 12, President Trump signed H.R. 5371, the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026, into law, ending a record-setting partial federal government shutdown that lasted 43 days.

After more than a month of inaction and failed votes in the Senate, a bipartisan group of senators drafted an amendment to the bill, which included full appropriations for FY2026 for the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Veterans Affairs, along with the Legislative Branch and Military Construction projects. Operations for the remaining components of the federal government are funded at FY2025 levels through January 30, 2026, to give Congress more time to pass additional appropriations measures. The Republican Senate leadership also pledged to hold a vote this year on extending the subsidies provided by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The U.S. House of Representatives — which had been in recess since September 19 — quickly convened to debate the amended bill and passed it on a 222–209 vote.

Legislative Update: National Defense Authorization Act

Both the House and the Senate have separately passed legislation reauthorizing the U.S. Department of Defense and the programs it administers (NDAA). There are significant differences between the two bills — H.R. 3838 and S. 2296 — and bicameral discussions have been ongoing since the Senate bill passed in early October.

Just the Facts:

» On November 12, President Trump signed the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026, into law, ending a record-setting partial federal government shutdown that lasted 43 days. After more than a month of inaction and failed votes in the Senate, a bipartisan group of senators drafted an amendment to the bill, which included full appropriations for FY2026 for the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Veterans Affairs, along with the Legislative Branch and Military Construction projects.

The Senate adopted an amendment to S. 2296 — S. Amdt. 3272, the Law Enforcement and Crime Victims Support Package, by voice vote and then passed the underlying bill on a 77–20 vote. The FOP pushed hard to make sure S. Amdt. 3272, which is a package of eight bills, all of which were favorably reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee on unanimous votes, were included in the final version of the NDAA. The Senate-passed bill contains the following provisions:

- The **Protecting First Responders from Secondary Exposure Act**, which would allow state and local governments to purchase containment devices through the existing Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)
- The **PROTECT Our Children Reauthorization Act**, which would update and reauthorize the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program that helps state and local law enforcement agencies combat online child exploitation and abuse
- The **Strong Communities Act**, which would establish a grant program for local law enforcement

agencies to assist in recruiting officers from their own community

- The **Reauthorizing Support and Treatment for Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act**, which would reauthorize programs for law enforcement family support services, suicide prevention programs, and mental health services for law enforcement officers
- The **Chief Herbert D. Proffitt Act**, which would amend the Public Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program to include retired public safety officers who are injured or killed in a targeted attack
- The **Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act**, which would categorize duty-related cancer fatalities as a line-of-duty death under the PSOB program
- The **Retired Law Enforcement Officers Continuing Service Act**, which would establish a grant program to support state and local agencies in leveraging the expertise of retired officers for tasks like assisting with investigations, forensic analysis and reviewing camera footage
- The **Improving Police Critical Aid for Responding**

to **Emergencies (CARE) Act**, which would expand the existing U.S. Department of Justice's Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) program to allow for the purchase of trauma kits.

The process of reconciling the two bills begins with consulting the committees of jurisdiction for any and all amendments that would, in the course of regular order, go through their committee. Representative James D. Jordan (R-Ohio), chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, has blocked the inclusion of the **Protecting First Responders from Secondary Exposure Act**, the **Strong Communities Act**, the **Reauthorizing STOIC Act**, the **Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act** and the **Retired Law Enforcement Officers Continuing Service Act**. He cleared the other three provisions.

The FOP strongly supports the **Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act**

and **Reauthorizing STOIC Act** provisions. We are working with House leadership and our allies in the Senate to find a path forward to include these two provisions in the final bill. We also continue to push for the implementation of the Department of Defense Law Enforcement Credential Act, which requires all civilian law enforcement officers employed by the DoD and its component agencies to be issued an appropriate law enforcement credential.

Other Legislative Activity

The FOP has supported the following legislation since the last issue of the *Journal*:

- **H.R. 5864 (Van Drew, R-N.J.)**, the Improving Police Critical Aid for Responding to Emergencies (CARE) Act, which would expand the existing Byrne-JAG program to allow for the purchase of trauma kits.

Sign Up for the FOP's Weekly Update

Are you getting the *Weekly Update* from Capitol Hill in your inbox every week? If not, go to tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update to sign up.

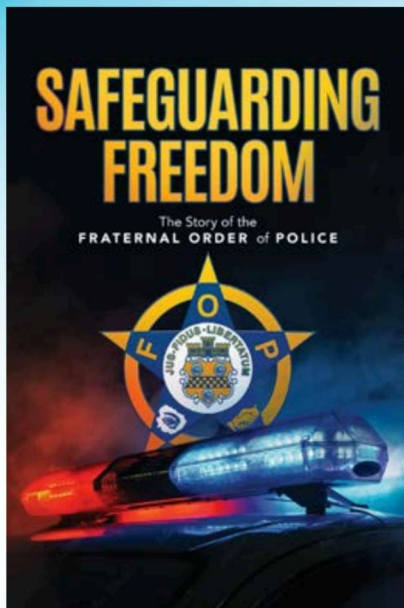
Getting the *Weekly Update* in your mailbox every Friday will help keep you and your members up to date with the latest news from Washington, D.C., with Congress and the administration.

Make sure you are a regular visitor to all our social media platforms, as these frequent posts are the best way to keep up with the National FOP's daily activity. Follow the National FOP on:

- Facebook (@GLFOP)
- X (@GLFOP)
- Instagram (@FOPnational)
- Truth Social (@FOPNational)

Do your part! Please **share**, **comment** and **like** our content.

Continued on page 28 >



SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM: The Story of the Fraternal Order of Police

The National Fraternal Order of Police History Committee and the National Board of Trustees are excited to present you with a new book, *Safeguarding Freedom: The Story of the Fraternal Order of Police*. This literary work is the result of reviewing historical documents, combing through thousands of photographs and conducting interviews to give the reader a comprehensive history of how the Fraternal Order of Police has impacted policing in America. Author Max DiLallo, co-author with James Patterson on numerous books, along with the direction of National History Committee Chair David Stevens, has worked tirelessly over the past year to reveal the journey of the FOP.

This fantastic book is available from the National Office for \$25 plus shipping, and the proceeds benefit our National FOP Foundation. Donations of \$30 or more to the Foundation will receive a free book.

Top Priorities in Brief



H.R. 3226, the Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act

House: 44 co-sponsors (12 R, 32 D)

Senate: Not yet introduced

H.R. 1505/S. 636, the Public Safety Employer–Employee Cooperation Act

House: 48 co-sponsors (7 R, 41 D)

Senate: 1 co-sponsor (1 D)

H.R. 2243/S. 679, the LEOSA Reform Act

House: Passed

Senate: 8 co-sponsors (8 R)

H.R. 1551/S. 167, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 93 co-sponsors (75 R, 18 D)

Senate: 23 co-sponsors (23 R)

H.R. 2094/S. 978, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act

House: 98 co-sponsors (34 R, 64 D)

Senate: 21 co-sponsors (7 R, 14 D)

To see a full list of legislation supported by the FOP in the previous Congress, please visit tinyurl.com/ycy5k5rv. Members should continue to monitor the FOP's social media platforms and our website for the latest legislative news.



WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 27 >

NFOP PAC Update

The 2026 midterms are now less than a year away. Notwithstanding the funds we raised at Conference, the PAC is still well short of the funds it needs to make an impact in next year's elections.

We need more of our members to contribute to ensure that our PAC has the resources to support candidates who will fight for our officers and the issues that are important to them. With the next election cycle still many months away, we have time to replenish our PAC funds.

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 to and understand the challenges facing law enforcement today.

We are urging members (and lodges) to sign up for recurring,

monthly contributions using their credit card. This is the most effective and reliable way to contribute and to strengthen our PAC.

These contributions need not be for large amounts (though these are also very much appreciated) — but every dollar helps! If every FOP member gave just \$1, we could raise \$382,000! If 10% of our members gave just \$5 this year, we would raise more than \$190,000.

To donate online, please go to 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 Avenue, NE Washington, D.C. 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for recurring monthly donations, please contact the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy 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. **FOP**



NFOP Labor Services Division: Building a Stronger Future for Law Enforcement Professionals



The NFOP Labor Services Division is committed to building a stronger future for law enforcement professionals. Stay engaged, informed and united.

Effective Union Strategies for 2025–26 Contract Negotiations

As we approach the critical period of law enforcement contract negotiations in 2025 and 2026, it's essential to be both strategic and forward-thinking. The following approaches can help unions secure better pay, benefits and working conditions for their members.

Data-Driven Bargaining

Numbers matter in every negotiation. By researching and comparing regional pay and benefits, unions can substantiate requests with credible data. Incorporating cost-saving wellness programs not only reduces sick leave but also boosts efficiency — proving these measures are more than perks; they are smart investments.

Coalition Building

Unity creates impact. Collaborating with community leaders and forming alliances with other unions, such as firefighters, amplifies the union's voice. These partnerships build public support that can be critical in influencing decision-makers during negotiations.

Strategic Messaging

Effective communication makes a difference. Focusing messaging on public safety, officer retention and wellness resonates with the community and policymakers alike. Proactive media outreach enables unions to shape the narrative to their advantage.

Just the Facts:

>> Numbers matter in every negotiation. By researching and comparing regional pay and benefits, unions can substantiate requests with credible data. Effective communication makes a difference. Focusing messaging on public safety, officer retention and wellness resonates with the community and policymakers alike.

Contract Structuring Tactics

Thoughtful contract design offers key leverage.

- **“Me too” clauses:** Ensure parity with other unions.
- **Sunset provisions:** Allow controversial policies to expire unless renewed.
- **Side letters:** Offer flexible solutions to specific issues without reopening the full contract.

All Politics Start at Home!

Advocacy at the local, state and federal levels safeguards bargaining rights and funding. Supporting political candidates aligned with union priorities helps shift the negotiation landscape in labor's favor.

Wellness and Retention Emphasis

Emphasizing wellness and retention bonuses is crucial. These benefits are essential for maintaining a strong, motivated workforce and for reducing the costs associated with burnout and turnover.

Conclusion

Successful union strategies in 2025 and 2026 blend data, the power of coalitions, smart contract structures, robust advocacy and a clear emphasis on wellness and retention. These tactics will help strengthen the bargaining position of law

enforcement professionals and secure their interests.

For collective bargaining support and training, contact labor@nationalfop.org or visit www.fop.net.

About the Author

*Roger Mayberry is the director of Labor Services for the FOP. With over 37 years of experience in labor relations, collective bargaining and grievance handling, he has dedicated his career to protecting the rights and futures of law enforcement professionals across the nation. **FOP***



**Scan the QR code
for more information
about NFOP Labor
Services.**

The “Superhuman Cop” Standard and the Future of Qualified Immunity



In *Griffiths v. Keith*, now before the U.S. Supreme Court, the National Fraternal Order of Police has filed an amicus brief in a case that could reshape how courts view the split-second decisions of armed officers in the field. The case arises from a fatal encounter between Officer James Griffiths of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority and Arthur Keith, a suspect who refused to drop a firearm. The Sixth Circuit denied Griffiths qualified immunity, ruling that deadly force was unconstitutional unless the suspect had already pointed the gun at the officer.

The NFOP argued that the Sixth Circuit’s ruling demands the impossible — requiring officers to act with superhuman speed and accuracy in life-or-death situations — and dangerously misconstrues both the realities of policing and established Supreme Court precedent. At the heart of the NFOP’s position is a simple proposition: the law should not require officers to wait to be shot before they can defend themselves. The brief warns that this reasoning effectively imposes a “superhuman cop” standard, holding officers to perceive, process and react faster than humanly possible.

Citing research from the Force Science Institute, the amicus brief explains that even under ideal conditions, it takes an average of 0.83 seconds for an officer to recognize a threat and return fire. In real-world conditions — where lighting is poor, distractions are many and movements are unpredictable — reaction times can double or triple. By contrast, a suspect can raise and fire a weapon in roughly a quarter of a second. That discrepancy leaves no room for hesitation. The NFOP argued that no credible law enforcement training program instructs officers to wait until a firearm is pointed directly at them before using defensive force. Doing so, it says, would be

Just the Facts:

» *Griffiths v. Keith* arises from a fatal encounter between Officer James Griffiths of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority and Arthur Keith, a suspect who refused to drop a firearm. The Sixth Circuit denied Griffiths qualified immunity, ruling that deadly force was unconstitutional unless the suspect had already pointed the gun at the officer. The NFOP argued that the Sixth Circuit’s ruling demands the impossible and dangerously misconstrues both the realities of policing and established Supreme Court precedent.

Between 2021 and 2023, nearly 200 officers were killed in the line of duty, and over 79,000 were assaulted in 2023 alone — a 10-year high.

“tantamount to training officers in how to lose deadly-force encounters.”

Beyond academic theory, the NFOP grounds its position in recent data from the FBI and real incidents nationwide. Between 2021 and 2023, nearly 200 officers were killed in the line of duty, and over 79,000 were assaulted in 2023 alone — a 10-year high. Ambush-style attacks have surged by more than 60% in recent years. These statistics, the NFOP says, demonstrate that violence against police often erupts “in the blink of an eye,” making rigid, hindsight-based rules lethal in practice.

The amicus brief also draws on

cognitive science to illustrate why the Sixth Circuit’s rule is unworkable. Human reaction involves four stages: sensation, recognition, situational awareness and response selection. Each step takes time; none can be skipped. Even when officers are highly trained, **they remain human** — bounded by the same neurological limits as anyone else. In tactical training, this dynamic is often modeled through the “OODA Loop” (Observe, Orient, Decide and Act). When suspects initiate violence, they are already acting while the officer is still observing and deciding. Forcing an officer to delay further — to wait until a gun is actually aimed — adds yet another cognitive cycle, exponentially increasing danger.

The NFOP emphasizes that this physiological reality is well understood in law enforcement training, but too often overlooked in the courtroom. By reducing the Fourth Amendment inquiry of constitutional reasonableness to a single question — “Did the suspect point the gun?” — the Sixth Circuit substitutes an oversimplified, mechanical test instead of the contextual analysis the Constitution demands.

Furthermore, the NFOP contends that the Sixth Circuit misapplied the law of qualified immunity — a doctrine designed to protect government officials

from personal civil liability when their conduct does not violate “clearly established” law. The Supreme Court has repeatedly instructed lower courts not to define rights at a “high level of generality.” Cases such as *District of Columbia v. Wesby*, *City of Tahlequah v. Bond* and *White v. Pauly* emphasize that for a right to be “clearly established,” there must be precedent with materially similar facts giving officers fair notice of what is prohibited.

Here, the NFOP argued that the Sixth Circuit ignored that requirement. Instead of identifying precedent forbidding deadly force against an armed suspect who refused to drop a gun, the panel relied on broad statements about excessive force. No Supreme Court or Sixth Circuit decision has held that an officer must wait until a weapon is aimed before responding with deadly force. In fact, Sixth Circuit precedent cuts the other way. In *Thomas v. City of Columbus* (2017), the court granted qualified immunity to an officer who fatally shot a man holding, but not pointing, a gun. The court reasoned that “at this range, a suspect could raise and fire a gun with little or no time for an officer to react.” That logic, the NFOP contends, applies squarely to *Griffiths*’ situation.

Lastly, the NFOP seeks to correct what it sees as widespread misunderstanding of qualified immunity. The doctrine is not a “license for misconduct” and does not shield criminal behavior or intentional rights violations. Rather, the doctrine’s purpose is balance: accountability for clearly unlawful conduct, paired with protection for reasonable, real-time decision-making. Indeed, it applies only to civil suits against individual officers who make reasonable, good-faith judgments in uncertain circumstances. Without qualified immunity, the NFOP warns, officers would face personal liability for decisions made in seconds, under threat of death. That fear could chill decisive action, leading to hesitation that endangers officers and civilians alike. The brief stresses: “We do not want to create a perverse incentive for officers to refrain from pursuing a fleeing suspect out of fear that a split-second decision might later expose them to personal liability.” Thus, while *Griffiths v. Keith* turns on a specific set of facts, the legal principles at stake reach far beyond one case: the outcome could influence how courts nationwide evaluate use-of-force incidents.

Overall, the NFOP’s amicus brief makes a clear point: the Constitution does **not** expect police officers to be perfect or all-knowing. The Fourth Amendment

asks for reasonableness, not impossible foresight. And what is “reasonable,” the NFOP argued, has to be judged from the view of an officer facing a fast-moving situation — not from the calm of a courtroom long after the fact. In urging the Supreme Court to step in, the NFOP asked the justices to bring the law back in line with both constitutional principles and real-world policing. Expecting officers to hold fire until a gun is already pointed at them, the brief warns, turns the law into a “death sentence.” The rules that govern police use of force should recognize that it is human beings — not superheroes — who wear the badge and make those split-second choices. **FOP**

FOP GENERAL COUNSEL

500 South Front Street,
Suite 1200
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 229-4567
Cell: (614) 581-1125
Email: ljames@amundsendavislaw.com

There Is ALWAYS Another Option

FOP Vetted and Approved Crisis Hotlines



[FOP.net/officer-wellness/crisis-hotlines](https://www.fop.net/officer-wellness/crisis-hotlines)



Leadership Matters 2026 — Early Registration Now Open



Leadership Matters 2026 promises to be an exceptional and inspiring event! With our move to the **South Point Casino and Spa in Las Vegas**, we're thrilled to offer an expanded agenda featuring more breakout sessions and an even broader range of educational opportunities.

In 2026, a full day will be devoted to topics related to **health care trusts, investment strategies, retirement planning and pension preparation**. For those seeking to strengthen their skills in **member representation**, we're expanding offerings to include sessions on **grievance handling, internal affairs representation, human performance and video literacy in use-of-force investigations** — and that's just the beginning.

We're also enhancing our leadership training tracks to support both new and seasoned leaders. Sessions such as "Local Lodge Leadership 101" and "Advanced Leadership Strategies" will be joined by engaging discussions and testimonials from experienced leaders who have overcome adversity in their own leadership journeys.

Our keynote speaker, **National FOP President Patrick Yoes**, will once again deliver his State of the FOP address, followed by an updated version of "Success by Design."

Secretary Holderfield will present on "Lodge Administration Duties" and "Membership Database Management and Utilization," and members of his staff will be available throughout the event to provide **hands-on training** with the new database system.

Additional featured presentations include:

- **Treasurer James Smallwood:** "You've Been Elected Treasurer — Now What?"



- **Second Vice President John Hoyt:** "Handling Line-of-Duty Deaths"
- **Sergeant-at-Arms Steve James:** "The Legal Defense Plan"
- **Chairman of Trustees Rob Pride:** "Robert's Rules of Order"

We'll also highlight the FOP's disaster relief efforts, member benefits, foundation building and fundraising, recruitment and retention, spirituality, diversity and legislative advocacy.

Several vendors will be on site to showcase specialized member benefit offerings, and attendees can visit the National Services and Apparel Room to purchase exclusive FOP merchandise from HALO.

At any given time, you'll have up to eight concurrent sessions to choose

from, many of which will be repeated on multiple days to ensure you don't miss a thing.

We've kept the registration cost at just **\$500, with an exclusive hotel rate of \$104 per night (all fees included)**. Attendees may also take advantage of discounted package options to participate in additional Pathways to Excellence events taking place earlier in the week.

Stay tuned for the launch of the **Pathways to Excellence event app** in **January 2026** and look for website links and updates from **FOPEducation@NationalFOP.org**. For any additional information, please reach out to us directly at that email address.

Until we meet again, God bless you and God bless the FOP! **FOP**

FOP DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

If you have further questions, contact Director Keith

Turney at kturney@fop.org, or (815) 482-5620. For more

information on CRI-TAC, visit cops.usdoj.gov/cri-tac.

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

MARCH 29–APRIL 3, 2026

South Point Hotel & Casino | Las Vegas, NV



[Register Today](#)

Packages are available.
See event registration page for details and pricing.

Exclusive Deal for Attendees!

We are pleased to offer a special room rate of **\$104 per night** (includes all fees) for event attendees.
This rate is available Sunday through Thursday.

Wellness Professionals' Forum – \$200

(March 29)

The Wellness Professionals' Forum brings together mental health and wellness professionals for a day of learning and networking. Highlights include an introduction to FOP wellness initiatives, seminars on working with law enforcement and a networking session.

Officer Wellness Summit – \$450

(March 30–31)

This interactive event offers 20+ breakout sessions, expert panels and hands-on wellness activities, plus access to FOP-approved programs supporting officers, families and clinicians.

Labor Leadership Summit – \$525

(March 30–31)

This exclusive course delivers the latest strategies for today's evolving law enforcement environment. Build leadership skills, stay ahead of trends and prepare your team for tomorrow's challenges.

Legal Counselors Seminar – \$675

(March 30–31)

The Legal Counselors Seminar delivers two days of specialized training for attorneys representing law enforcement. Topics include *Brady/Giglio*, arbitration, workers' comp, PTSD, officer wellness, duty to intervene, corrections, social media, key cases and expert witnesses.

Excellency in Chaplaincy – \$300

(March 31–April 1)

Join the first national gathering of FOP chaplains! This "back to basics" event connects new and seasoned chaplains for growth, networking and advanced development opportunities.

Leadership Matters – \$500

(April 1–3)

Leadership Matters is designed for new and aspiring leaders seeking a full view of the FOP. Choose tracks for key roles like secretary or treasurer, or explore topics such as effective meetings, Robert's Rules, labor and legal defense.

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE DESERVES EXCEPTIONAL RECOGNITION



PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA



100% USA LABOR
100% USA MATERIALS



888.411.7744
LIBERTYARTWORKS.COM