

THE SILENT THREAT AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT // P. 22

# FOP



# JOURNAL

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FEBRUARY 2026

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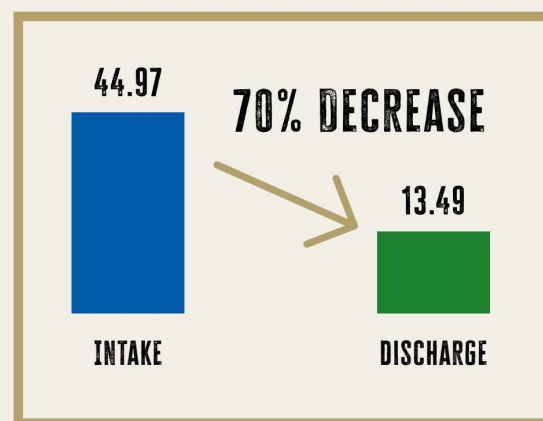
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**Marco Monteblanco,  
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IBIS technology enables links between shootings and faster investigative leads.

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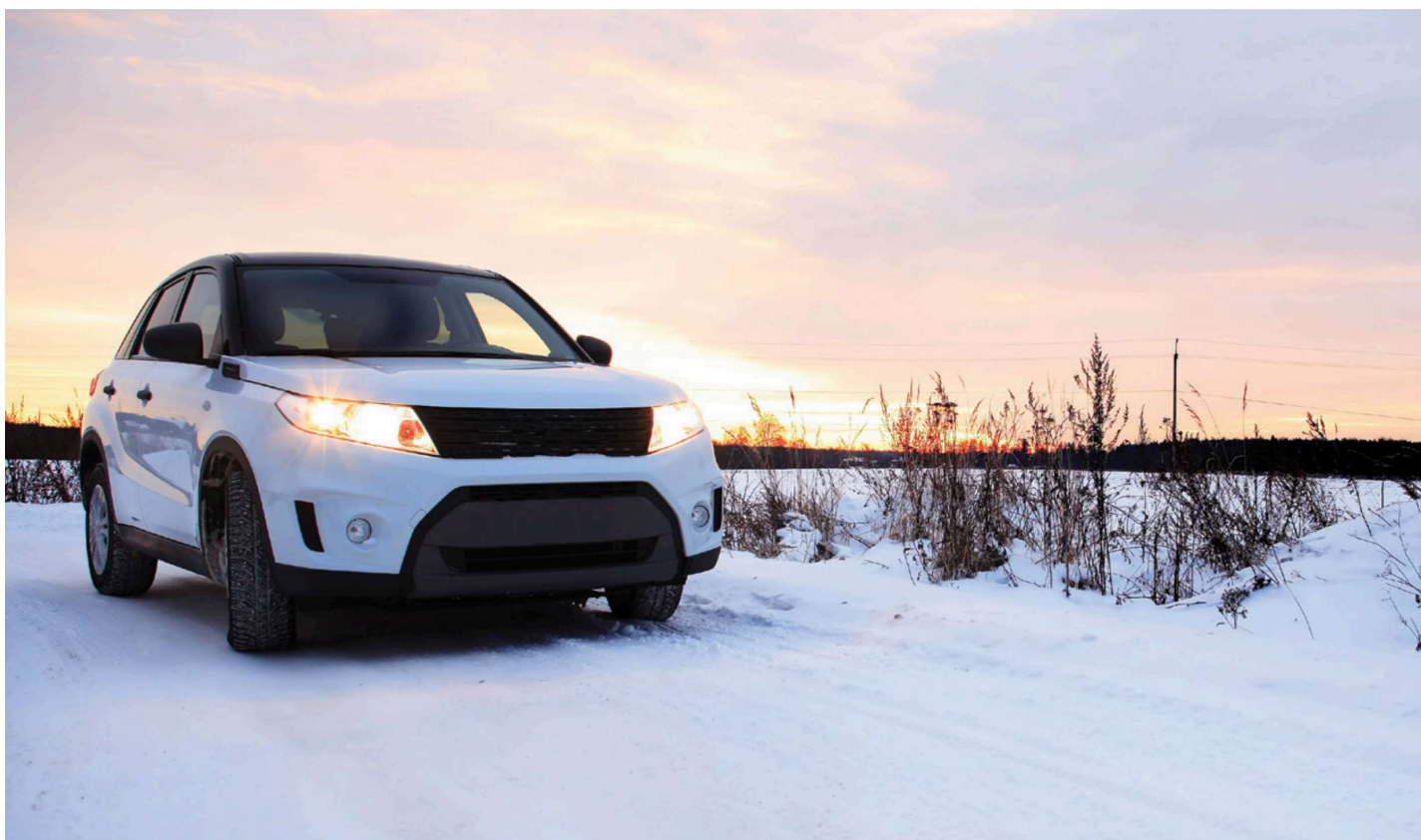
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# An Epidemic We Can No Longer Ignore



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

**A**lmost every day in 2025, somewhere in America, a police officer was shot. That is not a rhetorical flourish. It is the cold, hard truth confirmed by our National FOP year-end report: 347 officers shot in the line of duty in 2025, with 45 of those officers killed. Since 2021, more than 2,000 officers have been shot while serving their communities. These numbers represent fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, men and women who left for work and never came home, or who survived attacks that will forever change their lives. This level of violence against law enforcement is horrifying, unsustainable, and a national disgrace.

While advances in trauma medicine and protective equipment have reduced lethality, the sheer volume of attacks has remained stubbornly high. In 2025 alone, 67 ambush-style attacks resulted in 90 officers shot, 22 of them killed.

Ambushes are not spontaneous acts of desperation; they are calculated attacks on officers simply because they wear the uniform.

This is not happening in a vacuum.

As I testified before the House Homeland Security Committee, we have witnessed a sustained campaign of anti-law enforcement rhetoric in recent years, rhetoric that falsely paints police officers as enemies rather than guardians. Words matter. When public figures, media outlets, and activist organizations normalize hostility toward law enforcement, it emboldens those willing to act on that hatred. The result is measured not just in data, but in funerals, folded flags, and grieving families.

At the same time, our profession faces a historic recruitment and retention crisis. What parent would encourage their child to enter a profession where being ambushed has become an occupational hazard? When violence becomes routine, service becomes sacrifice, and fewer are willing to answer the call.

Congress has had a solution before it for years.

The Protect and Serve Act would

create federal penalties for ambushes and unprovoked attacks on law enforcement officers, recognizing these assaults for what they are, acts that strike at the foundation of public safety. Yet despite years of testimony, data, and pleas from law enforcement leaders, the bill remains stalled.

So, I ask again: What more will it take?


We have the data. We have the names. We have funerals. We have officers wearing mourning bands year-round. The truth is undeniable: America faces an epidemic of violence against law enforcement.

This is why I am calling on every FOP member, every lodge, and every supporter of public safety to join a nationwide grassroots campaign to demand Congressional action. This is not just a Washington issue; it is a kitchen table issue in every community where officers serve. Call your representatives. Attend town halls. Write letters. Speak at community meetings. Let Congress know that protecting those who protect us is not optional; it is essential.

Legislators respond when citizens speak loudly and persistently. We must ensure that the voices of law enforcement families are heard above the noise of those who would vilify the badge. The Protect and Serve Act must become law, not next year, not after the next tragedy, but now.

The current status quo is unacceptable. Our officers deserve more than prayers after tragedy. They deserve action before the next attack.

As always, the Fraternal Order of Police will continue to stand watch, but we cannot fight this battle alone. Together, we will demand the respect, protection, and recognition that our officers have earned. **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!

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# Service, Stability and Support for Our Membership



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

Greetings, my brothers and sisters. I pray that you have fared well during the major snow and ice storms from last month that gripped the majority of our country. It was so severe in Nashville that we had to close the office for three days and have staff work from home. The problem with that is that over half of our staff lost power and there is no internet service. Fortunately, all were safe, and the power was restored by January 28. Even in Florida, snow flurries were reported in the Tampa area. My heart goes out to our many sisters and brothers who worked the streets during these storms, keeping their communities safe.

If you haven't yet received your 2026 membership card, don't fret, it's on its way. We are running about six weeks behind our normal cycle in processing the first half per capita, printing and mailing cards. There are several factors that have created this delay. First, the new membership database system has many glitches, which is to be expected with a new system. We are addressing the issues as they arise, and having fixes done or creating workarounds to process payments and cards. Secondly, since it is a new system, there is a huge learning curve for National staff and local and state lodge secretaries. Next, we were short-staffed in the membership department. Thankfully, I was able to interview several outstanding candidates and hired Xavier Hofstetter to fill the gap. Xavier started on December 29, 2025. Finally, we use four commercial specialty printers to print individual cards. Those printers each run about 1,000 cards per day. Our oldest printer, which is eight years old and has been refurbished twice, started to go down. Not wanting to spend money

on an "end-of-life machine," we purchased a new printer, which will come online this week. With all these issues, I appreciate your understanding and patience.

As I mentioned with the new membership database system, we continue to work with our vendor, ACGI, daily. Our IT consultant, Mark Hong, along with our internal IT staff, Matthew Phillips and Gavin Boler, are doing a phenomenal job of working out the glitches and issues. Obviously, with a project of this magnitude, there are going to be things that come up that were not planned for or expected. Our commitment is to make the system as user-friendly as possible. We will continue to do just that.

With so many new lodge officers at the local and state levels, now is the time to register and attend Pathways to Excellence in Las Vegas, Nevada, from March 29 through April 3. A complete listing is in the *Journal* on page 41. Director of Education and Outreach

Continued on page 14 >

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**FOP DAY ON THE HILL**  
FEBRUARY 2-4, 2026  
Washington, D.C.

**PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE**  
MARCH 29-APRIL 3, 2026  
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**SPRING BOARD MEETING**  
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National Board Meeting – April 24-25  
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*— Jennifer Howell, Communications Operator II, Carlsbad CA Police Department*

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MEETING

## SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 12 >

Keith Turney, along with Editor and Seminar Coordinator Stephanie Simpson, have done an outstanding job at putting this educational multitrack experience together. I encourage you to attend the entire program week since you will receive instruction on wellness, chaplaincy, labor and legal topics as well as lodge administration. Even if you can't attend everything, please consider choosing a track that best suits your lodge's needs. We will have membership staff and IT staff on site during the Leadership Matters program for individual hands-on training. It is going to be a fantastic program, and I look forward to seeing you there. Also, if you are a current or newly elected lodge officer, remind your lodge secretary to update the lodge roster form and send it to your state and national membership department.

President Yoes has requested a review of all National FOP Benefits providers to determine what products or services

they offer and what discounts or deals our members receive. Steve Gvasio, our NFOP insurance consultant, along with Brother Jack Simington, chairman of the National FOP Benefits Committee, will be doing a deep dive into the programs, services, and products offered. I have assigned several members of my staff

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**Leadership Matters  
is going to be a  
fantastic program,  
and I look forward to  
seeing you there.**

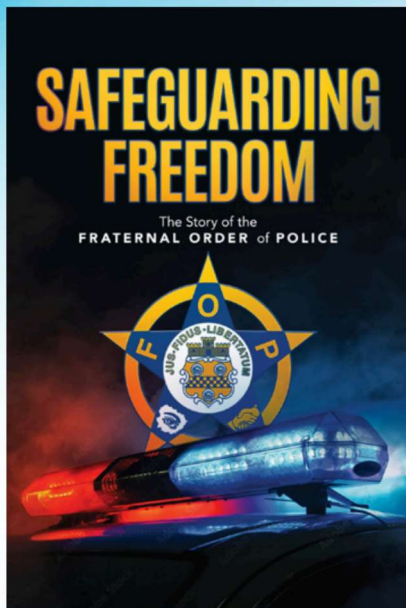
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to assist with this project, including accounts receivable, EXPO coordinator, and my administrative assistant, Teri Crone. The goal is to determine who is offering the best deals to our

members, eliminate those that are not, and aggressively seek new vendors to add to our portfolio. If you know of a vendor that would be of interest to our membership, let us know. I'll keep you posted on our progress.

We are always looking for interesting articles for the *Journal*. When you have something going on at your lodge, such as a community outreach program, a major milestone of a member, a lodge renovation project, a legislative initiative, or anything else that our other 382,000 members would enjoy learning about or gaining inspiration from doing something similar, let us know. Simply send us a few photos and a paragraph or two on the event or program. It may well be featured in an upcoming *Journal* and, of course, you will be credited with the article.

In closing, it is a pleasure serving you as your national secretary. My staff and I stand ready to assist you in any way we can. As always, be safe out there, and I look forward to talking, emailing, or seeing you soon. **FOP**



## **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.**





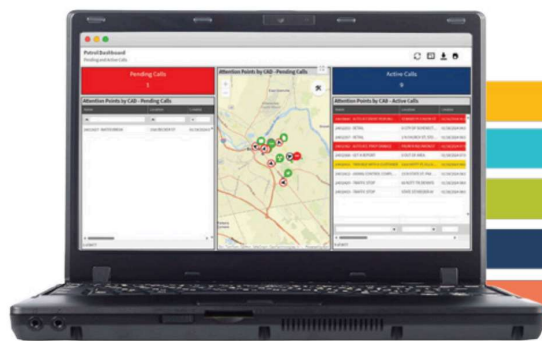
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# Newark Police Ballistic Lab Ranked Fifth in the Country

BARRY CARTER / WRITER, NEWARK DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**S**hell casings and projectiles tell parts of a crime story that the Newark Police Ballistic Lab can dissect and piece together in short order, making it one of the best facilities in the country for its

speed and laser accuracy.

In 24 hours — and sometimes sooner — the lab will know how many shooters were involved, what type of weapon was used and who fired the first shot. With that intelligence, the Newark Police Division can close cases, predict crime trends and determine if rival groups are beefing with each other.

“It’s almost like a road map that we provide to the investigative unit,” said Captain John Patela, commander of Ballistics and Crime Scene. “We give them real-time intelligence that says this is where you should be looking.”

They’ve been practicing for more than 20 years, matching cartridges to shootings while building a stellar reputation. Newark’s lab is the best of eight in New Jersey, and its ballistic facility rivals any in the country. Newark is ranked fifth out of 418 labs, and Patela recently found out why from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

In August, the federal agency told him that

Newark had reached 6,000 IBIS hits. IBIS is the Integrated Ballistic Identification System, a platform that analyzes and compares digital images of bullets and cartridge cases from crime scenes.

The achievement is listed on a placard that hangs high on the lab’s office wall above previous IBIS honors. Newark reached 3,000 hits in 2016, working steadily toward 4,500 hits in 2021, and 5,500 two years ago.

The latest milestone, however, shocked Patela when he read an email from the ATF explaining what Newark had done. For Patela, it’s not about the numbers or caseload volume his five-member team can handle.

They’re just doing the work, pushing out the best intelligence for investigators and 14 other law enforcement agencies that rely on Newark’s expertise.

Newark Public Safety Director Emanuel Miranda Sr. understands the value of this work, having called on Patela many times in the past when he led a homicide task force made up of the Newark Police Division and the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office.

“Our ballistic lab is top-notch for its ability to turn over intelligence quickly and make connections so our detectives can know where the next shooting may occur,” Miranda said.

What Newark has accomplished is undeniable





when you talk to Joseph Brennan, a retired New Jersey State Police lieutenant colonel, who is now the state's director of crime control and counterterrorism strategy.

"In those 6,000 hits, they provided information to investigators that have closed cases, brought closure, justice to the actors and closure to victims of crimes and made the community safer," Brennan said.

Brennan believes Newark changed policing across the state by using IBIS to generate "tip and lead" information for investigators in 24 hours. No one in the state, he said, was using IBIS like Newark to investigate crime.

"Most people were doing it for court, but we were doing it for investigative purposes, so we could link jobs together and put people with guns," said retired Captain William Mehalaris, who was there during the early stages. "We could predict where the retaliation would come. A lot of places realized we were onto something."

The intelligence gleaned from shell casings has guided Newark commanders on where to deploy officers, and it has helped, in several instances, solve crimes moments after

they happen. For example, in 2022, nine people were shot on Clinton Place, said Captain Steve Dellavalle, commander of Newark's Intelligence Division. As part of the investigation, he said, Newark detectives executed a warrant at a home, where weapons were recovered and taken to the ballistics lab.

"Before we left the house, the gun matches the nine people shot," Dellavalle said. "It [ballistic lab] lets us get that intelligence in real time."

The intel journey begins in a state-of-the-art building, a far

**Whenever there's a match, Patela knows what they're doing makes a difference, and his team is relentless about providing the best information to investigators.**

cry from the 100-year-old storage warehouse where investigators once worked. In the new facility, Newark's lab processes, on average, 900 weapons annually. Each is swabbed for DNA and fingerprints and fire-tested into a 500-gallon water tank.

Comparison microscopes are used to examine computer images of casings or projectiles from crime scenes. Those casings get entered into the IBIS system, which takes photographs and measurements, and matches them against previous entries to see if a gun has been used in other crimes.

"Even if you entered something 10 to 15 years ago, it's going to show here," said Antonio Badim, a ballistic investigator of 17 years. "It's always correlating against any previously entered assignment." The lab's work has been critical in high-profile investigations, like the 2014 Brendan Tevlin case. Newark matched casings to a weapon that was used to kill two men in Seattle, Washington. Evidence from that shooting matched casings in the shooting death of Tevlin, a college student from Livingston, New Jersey, who was shot at a traffic light in West Orange.

Whenever there's a match, Patela knows what they're doing makes a difference, and his team is relentless about providing the best information to investigators.

"We take this work personally," he said. "We understand that every firearm that comes off the street, we're saving somebody else's life." **FOP**



Detective Angelina Barnes

# A Reminder of the Importance of Self-Care

## FOURTEEN WAYS TO LOVE YOURSELF

SHERRI MARTIN / DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS

*Editor's note: This article first ran in the February 2025 issue.*

**A**s first responders, we are trained to provide care to others. In this month of Valentine's Day, in the spirit of love, while caring for those you love, why not make a plan to give extra love to yourself as well?

It's a given that law enforcement is often a demanding job that can place extra stress not only on officers, but on their families as well. When schedules are busy, days are shorter, and weather outside is frightful, it can be easy to get in a rhythm of working, plopping at home on the couch, calling it a day, and doing it all over again. Doing something new or different can end up taking a backseat. Self-care might take a bit of intentional planning to start. But beginning a new habit is always possible, and when it comes to taking care of and loving yourself, consider it as necessary as taking care of others.

Get started today with one of these ideas. Tomorrow try another. Then make it a weekly plan! With 28 days in the month, grab a calendar and schedule each one twice!

1. **Enjoy a great meal.** Think about taking in a delicious but nutritious choice. Or have a special meal to indulge in that one sinful dish you love to eat. If you enjoy cooking, prepare a special meal for someone you love!
2. **Get a good night's (or day's) sleep.** With hectic schedules and overtime, it can be hard to get adequate

rest. However, even one solid 8-hour session of uninterrupted sleep in a week can help your body regenerate and can provide you with a clearer head. Set yourself up for good rest by ensuring it is quiet (use earplugs if you need!) a comfortable temperature, and dark (sleep masks are golden!) in the room where you slumber.

3. **Go for a walk.** Wintry weather outside? If you aren't a fan of the gym or the treadmill, think of a place indoors that has room for you to walk and things for you to see or do. Indoor shopping malls are a popular place for walks when the weather is bad. Physical movement of any kind gets the blood pumping, makes the heart stronger and has been proven to improve mood.
4. **Phone a friend.** With non-traditional work schedules and rotating shifts, it is often difficult to keep in touch with friends. Make a plan to call a friend you haven't talked to as much as you would like. Write it down to help you remember or set a reminder in your watch or phone.
5. **Take a deep breath.** Fill your lungs and hold it for a count of three, and then completely exhale all of your breath out. Then do it again. When we are stressed or anxious, taking a few deep breaths can have a tremendous impact on our state of mind and sense of calm.
6. **Plan a "me" day.** Ever feel like you spend all your time working and doing for others and that you never get a



chance to just do what you want? Sometimes it's difficult to get things done without a plan. So first, plan which day you will take time for yourself. Then let family and others know. It may feel like you are being selfish, but everyone deserves time to do what they enjoy. Then plan what you will do on "your" day. Finally, make it happen and enjoy!

7. **Practice positive self-talk.** This tip conjures up images of Stuart Smalley and his characteristic affirmations. However, using positive phrases to encourage yourself really does work. Humans seek to validate what they believe. If you tell yourself you can't do something, it is likely that you won't. Reminding yourself (out loud if you have to!) of your strengths and good qualities can improve your mood and make you more confident and productive.
8. **Thank yourself and those around you.** Spend a few minutes thinking about people in your life for whom you are grateful and consider

exactly what they do to make your life better. Then let them know how you feel. If it's hard for you to express out loud, write a message. Also think about something you have done lately that turned out exactly the way you hoped. Maybe it's something as simple as having organized a closet. Thank yourself for getting that project completed!

9. **Play!** Even if you think it might be silly, do that thing that excites you or makes you laugh. For some, it may be video games. Maybe dancing? Crank up those tunes and sing along at the top of your lungs. Whether it's playing fetch with your dog or basketball with your buddies, playing dress up with your kids or cards with your honey, have some fun!
10. **Buy yourself a little something.** Choose that something you have been eyeing for awhile or find a little something on impulse that makes you smile. It's always fun to get something new that we love or enjoy. If you're still tight on funds after holiday spending, make it an

inexpensive but fun item.

11. **Connect with your favorite hobby.** Hobby time often gets buried in the demands of work and the to-dos of busy weeks. But working on something you can get completely absorbed in is therapeutic. It helps us to get into a state of flow in which we are challenging our minds, abilities, or creativity, yet we are enjoying the process.
12. **Learn something new.** It could be something as simple as YouTubing a small home repair or learning a new line dance. If you are more ambitious, take an online class or take up learning a new language. Learning new things keeps the mind young and healthy!
13. **Let go of negativity.** Been harboring hurt feelings or resentment over something that happened in the past? Unfortunately, holding on to hurt feelings can be like holding onto broken glass. It only hurts

Continued on page 20 >



## 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.**

# SHARE YOUR STORY!

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

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



## SELF-CARE

*Continued from page 19 >*

the person holding it. Identify something about which you are angry or hurt, then be intentional about letting it go. There is no need to tell anyone unless you want to. Just put it down, let it go, and find peace in not allowing negative thoughts to hurt or anger you any longer.

### 14. **Reflect on your spiritual side.**

It can be very meaningful to look outside of ourselves and consider how we are a part of something bigger. Whether you practice a religion as a faithful churchgoer or you take quiet time to meditate in nature, taking time each week to nourish this part of yourself can be the most important act of love for your soul.

Hopefully, these tips for self-care are not news but instead reminders. If you learned something new, get out there and try it out. Sharing self-care with others you treasure can be the greatest act of love you show for them as well! **FOP**

## WELLNESS PROVIDERS

### **Chateau Recovery** Midway, UT

[chateaurecovery.com/first-responders](http://chateaurecovery.com/first-responders)

### **FHE Health:** **Shatterproof Program** Deerfield Beach, FL

[fhrehab.com/services/first-responders](http://fhrehab.com/services/first-responders)

### **First Responder Wellness by Simple Recovery** Costa Mesa, CA

[firstresponder-wellness.com](http://firstresponder-wellness.com)

### **Harbor of Grace First Responder Program** Havre de Grace, MD

[harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders](http://harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders)

### **Throttle and Thrive** Palos Verdes Estates, CA

[throttleandthrive.com](http://throttleandthrive.com)

### **Warrior's Heart** Bandera, TX

[warriorsheart.com](http://warriorsheart.com)

Find more vetted and approved wellness providers and programs at [fop.net/officer-wellness/providers](http://fop.net/officer-wellness/providers).



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**[projectlifesaver.org](http://projectlifesaver.org)**

[youtube.com/@ProjectLifesaverInternational](https://youtube.com/@ProjectLifesaverInternational)

### **IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF SECONDS BEFORE EVERY SECOND MATTERS.**

Wandering and elopement are common behaviors among people with autism, dementia, Down syndrome and other cognitive conditions. Children and adults can go missing in an instant from even the most "protected" environments and watchful supervision. And when they do, time is always of the essence as life-threatening challenges await that standard SAR protocol simply cannot address. The Project Lifesaver approach addresses the unique challenges involved by applying the strategic methodology and proven-effective radio-frequency (RF) technology required to quickly and efficiently locate missing participants.

**It's your call. How do you want it to end?**



# TOP 10 THINGS OFFICERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BLOOD PRESSURE

**H**igh blood pressure is a silent threat that can impact both your health and your performance on the job. Understanding the risks and knowing your numbers are key steps in protecting your long-term readiness and well-being.

1. **High blood pressure can impact your brain and job performance.** There's strong evidence that high blood pressure increases the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Protecting your brain health is essential for staying sharp on duty. Lowering your blood pressure now can help safeguard your decision-making and reaction time in the future.
2. **It's a leading risk factor for stroke and heart disease.** High blood pressure is the top risk

*Continued on page 24 >*

Check out the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8™ ([tinyurl.com/AHALifesEssential8](https://tinyurl.com/AHALifesEssential8)) resources or 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](https://heart.org)

## Blood Pressure Categories



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120–129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130–139	or	80–89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional.)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911.)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

\*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking

[heart.org/bplevels](https://heart.org/bplevels)

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## BLOOD PRESSURE

Continued from page 22 >

factor for stroke and heart conditions like coronary artery disease, heart failure and atrial fibrillation (AFib). These conditions can sideline you from active duty and affect your long-term health.

3. **Stress and shift work can raise your risk.** Law enforcement officers often face high-stress situations, irregular hours and disrupted sleep — all of which can contribute to high blood pressure. Regular monitoring is key.

4. **Know Your numbers.**

Normal blood pressure is:

- **Systolic** (top number): less than 120
- **Diastolic** (bottom number): less than 80

*If your numbers are higher, talk to a health care professional. If your systolic is above 180 or diastolic above 120, and you have symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath or vision changes, call 9-1-1 immediately.*

5. **Anyone can develop high blood pressure.** It's not just older adults. Officers of all ages — and their family members — should check their blood pressure regularly.

6. **Get accurate readings.**

When checking your blood pressure, sit with your back supported, feet flat and arm at heart level. Stay quiet and still for the most accurate reading. Learn more here: [tinyurl.com/4n9mxye](https://tinyurl.com/4n9mxye).

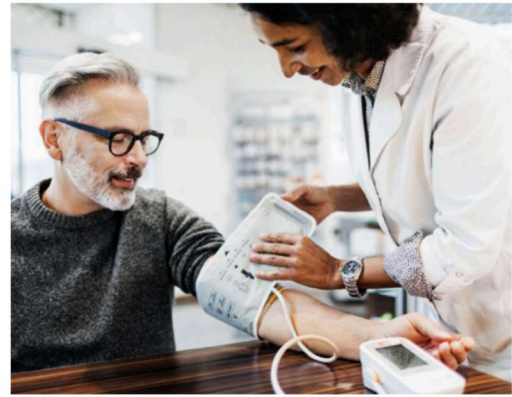
7. **Lifestyle changes matter — but medication may be needed.**

Healthy habits like reducing stress, eating well and exercising help, but some officers may need high blood pressure medication ([tinyurl.com/a37ndrp4](https://tinyurl.com/a37ndrp4)). Learn about treatment options from your health care provider.

8. **Nutrition counts.**

- **Limit sodium (salt):** Aim for less than 2,300 mg per day, ideally under 1,500 mg ([tinyurl.com/yz4m3h6a](https://tinyurl.com/yz4m3h6a)).
- **Eat more fruits and vegetables:** Variety is key.
- **Limit alcohol:** Drinking less or none helps control blood pressure.

9. **Weight management helps.** If you're carrying extra weight, losing about 5% of your body weight can make a big difference. For example, if you weigh 180 pounds, losing



nine pounds can help lower blood pressure.

10. **Watch for other conditions.**

Sleep apnea ([tinyurl.com/2vv536j7](https://tinyurl.com/2vv536j7)), diabetes ([tinyurl.com/mrr657vj](https://tinyurl.com/mrr657vj)) and thyroid ([tinyurl.com/3nhxyj96](https://tinyurl.com/3nhxyj96)) problems can contribute to high blood pressure. If you have symptoms like snoring, fatigue or unexplained weight changes, get checked.

### Why This Matters for Law Enforcement

High blood pressure can affect reaction time, endurance and overall health — critical for officers in high-pressure situations. Regular monitoring and proactive management can help you stay fit for duty and protect your long-term health. **FOP**



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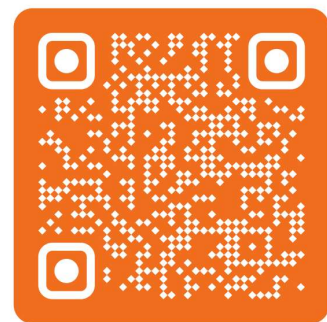




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# University of Maryland Global Campus

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**  
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STATE UNIVERSITY  
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### UMGC Offers Fast-Track Criminal Justice Degree for Police Officers

**U**niversity of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) has created a streamlined path to a bachelor's degree in criminal justice for current and recently retired police officers ([tinyurl.com/ytbate6n](https://tinyurl.com/ytbate6n)). The program awards up to 60 credits for academy training and education, cutting the time and cost of earning a degree by about half compared to traditional programs. Admission to law enforcement-specific courses is restricted to officers, and the curriculum is tailored to topics most relevant to policing.

While most police departments don't require a bachelor's degree to be hired, many pay officers a salary incentive based on their level of education. In addition, because more than a third of police officers have a bachelor's degree or higher, officers without a degree may find it challenging to compete for things like promotions and special assignments. Finally, officers approaching retirement and looking to use their law enforcement skills and experience in another field, such as federal service, will find the

search much more difficult without a degree.

UMGC's flexible structure supports working adults, with 80% of the university's students working full-time, and is responsive to the shifts that police officers work and the variety of job duties they are assigned. Classes are eight weeks long, so the commitment is easier to manage than a traditional 15-week schedule. There are also no class meetings to attend that could conflict with a student's availability, given their shift assignment. Faculty members are long-time experienced practitioners — including officers, detectives, administrators and chiefs — who understand the challenges of balancing school and law enforcement careers, many of them having earned their own degrees while working. Many are continuing to do the same work they are teaching in the classroom.

Like the teaching faculty, program administrators also have law enforcement experience. Law enforcement track administrators are available to work with police officers who have atypical police certification records and college coursework histories to find the most

advantageous path to a bachelor's degree.

Program administrators assist officers with atypical certification records and prior coursework to maximize credit transfer. There is no cost for credits awarded for police experience, which are added after the first class. Existing college credits can be combined with academy credits, and partnerships with organizations like the Fraternal Order of Police can waive application fees and reduce out-of-state tuition.

Police officers interested in undergraduate degrees in fields other than criminal justice can earn up to 15 credits for their academy experience and apply them to the elective requirements for many other UMGC programs. Those who already have an undergraduate degree may consider UMGC's master's in public safety leadership, which will add a law enforcement specialization in fall 2026. Future options are also planned for corrections, fire and EMS, and school safety and security specializations.

UMGC also offers opportunities for non-sworn law enforcement personnel, including certificates in drones and crime scene investigation, plus over 135 degrees and certificates, including



30 online bachelor's and 55 graduate programs. Most recently, criminal justice administrators have connected non-sworn law enforcement applicants to the university's human resources and contracts and acquisitions programs. Transfer-friendly policies and prior learning assessments help these students earn credit for their professional experience.

There are no standardized tests required for admission, so once you've completed a quick application ([apply.umgc.edu](http://apply.umgc.edu)), success coaches begin working with you to gather necessary documents. After you establish your eligibility for the program, law enforcement track administrators direct you to a contact with the appropriate Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to retrieve your law enforcement transcripts and receive credit for your experience. All eligible prior learning and college coursework will be compiled into a report with the remaining classes outlined. UMGC success coaches can review all options with you, including how prior learning and previous coursework could be applied to various other programs in the university, making the impact of various choices clear.

#### About UMGC

University of Maryland Global Campus was founded more than 75 years ago, specifically to serve the higher education needs of working adults and military service members. Today, UMGC is the largest provider of postsecondary education in Maryland. It continues its global tradition with online and hybrid courses, more than 175 classroom and service locations worldwide and more than 135 degrees and certificates backed by the reputation of a state university and the University System of Maryland. For more information, visit [www.umgc.edu](http://www.umgc.edu). **FOP**

[WWW.FOP.NET](http://WWW.FOP.NET)

## 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**.



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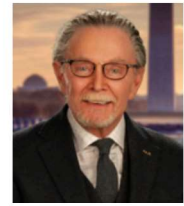


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# House Passes Final Appropriations Measures



Facing a deadline of January 30 to complete work on the appropriations measures to avoid another partial government shutdown, the House focused its effort on passing the remaining spending bills.

Earlier this month, the House and the Senate passed H.R. 6938, the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, on a final House vote of 397–28. The Senate approved the measure on an 82–15 vote, and it has been sent to the president, who is expected to sign it into law.

This legislation provides critical funding for the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and the grant programs it administers to assist State and local law enforcement agencies. The bill includes \$800 million for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) for the COPS Hiring Program, Regional Information Sharing Services, and Anti-Methamphetamine and Anti-Heroin Task Forces. The bill explicitly maintains the COPS Office as a distinct grantmaking entity within DOJ, ensuring continued independence and focus on community policing, and preventing the Office from being absorbed by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP).

The House considered and passed H.R. 7006, the Financial Services and General Government and National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026, on a 341–79 vote.

The House next considered a four-bill package that would make appropriations for the U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and

## Just the Facts:

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Homeland Security. The House took a divided vote — one on H.R. 7147, the Homeland Security measure, which passed on a 220–207 vote. The second vote, on H.R. 7148, passed on a 341–88 vote.

The Senate is expected to act on the six spending bills next week — before the January 30 deadline.

## Legislative Update: Protect and Serve Act and LEO Equity Act

Staff in the Washington, D.C., office returned from the holiday break with a renewed focus on two of the FOP's top legislative priorities: the Protect and Serve Act and the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act.

In the House, our efforts have been focused on increasing the number of Republican co-sponsors on the Judiciary Committee. The bill does not have sufficient support from committee Republicans to advance through committee.

In the Senate, the FOP has been working with the offices of Senators Christopher A. Coons (D-Del.) and Catherine M. Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) about potential amendments to the bill text that they would support. Right now, the bill is a Republican-only bill.

In the House, the FOP is

focused on increasing the number of co-sponsors on the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act, from its current 47 co-sponsors to closer to the almost 90 cosponsors we earned in the previous Congress.

In the Senate, we have struggled to find a Republican lead for the bill and have decided to have the bill introduced with just Senator Cory A. Booker (D-N.J.) as the sponsor.

## Legislative Update: HELPER Act

The Washington, D.C., staff recently participated in a stakeholder meeting to renew our campaign to advance H.R. 2094/S. 978, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator and Responder (HELPER) Act.

The meeting was led by staff in the offices of Representatives John H. Rutherford (R-Fla.), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.), Andrew R. Garbarino (R-N.Y.), and Joshua S. Gottheimer (D-N.J.) as well as Senators Ashley B. Moody (R-Fla.), T. Jonathan Ossoff (D-Ga.), William M. Cassidy (R-La.) and Raphael G. Warnock (D-Ga.) in the Senate.

The HELPER Act, which is a priority for the FOP, would

Continued on page 30 >



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## Top Priorities in Brief



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

**House:** 47 co-sponsors (14 R, 33 D)

**Senate:** Not yet introduced

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

**House:** 49 co-sponsors (8 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:** 95 co-sponsors (77 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:** 104 co-sponsors (35 R, 69 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](https://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 28 >*

establish a new home loan program administered by the Federal Housing Administration to help public safety officers, first responders, and teachers purchase homes. Specifically, the bill would:

- Create a one-time use home loan program under the FHA for law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMT), paramedics and pre-K-12 teachers
- Eliminate the down payment requirement
- Eliminate the monthly mortgage insurance premium (MIP) requirement and require “not less than 3% upfront mortgage insurance (UFMI) premium to ensure the solvency of the program
- Requires the program to be reauthorized after five years

As of mid-January, the bill has 104 co-sponsors in the House and 21 in the Senate.

### **Legislative Update: CLEAN DC Act**

In December, the House considered and passed H.R. 5107, the Common-Sense Law Enforcement and Accountability Now in D.C. Act, on a 233–190 vote. The FOP is a key supporter of the legislation, which repeals the entirety of Washington, D.C.’s Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022 ([tinyurl.com/mwhuvx7p](https://tinyurl.com/mwhuvx7p)). This bill goes beyond just the restoration of the collective bargaining provisions and would also eliminate restrictive measures that have hampered the ability of the officers serving the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) from doing their jobs and allow them to perform their duties more effectively while maintaining essential protections. This measure is of particular importance to the FOP’s D.C. Police Union, which represents the officers of the MPD.

The bill is pending in the Senate and National President Yoes recently sent a letter to Senate leadership urging them to bring the bipartisan

bill to the floor for a vote ([tinyurl.com/53rb2vr2](https://tinyurl.com/53rb2vr2)).

### **Other Legislative Activity**

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

- **H.R. 5573**, the Combating Fentanyl Poisonings Act, which would provide a grant initiative through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) program to combat fentanyl by supporting law enforcement and community organizations
- **H.R. 6911**, the COPS Anti-Organized Crime and Cartel Enforcement Act, which would establish a new grant program to be administered by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) that would provide resources for State and local law enforcement agencies to create and equip specialized units dedicated to combatting organized crime, cartel operations, and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)
- **H.R. 7114/S. 3453**, the No Bounties on Badges Act, which would authorize Federal rewards for information leading to the arrest, conviction or prevention of individuals who offer bounties to harm or kill law enforcement officers

### **Sign Up for the FOP’s Weekly Update**

Are you getting the *Weekly Update* from Capitol Hill in your inbox every week? If not, please go to [tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update](https://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

*Continued on page 32 >*





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## WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 30 >

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### NFOP PAC Update

The 2026 midterms are less than a year away, but our PAC is 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 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

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**We are asking all members to find a way to contribute to the National FOP PAC.**

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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 \$191,000.

To donate online, please go to **[nfop-pac.firstresponderprocessing.com](https://nfop-pac.firstresponderprocessing.com)**. If you would like to donate via check, please make it out to the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee and mail it to 328 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, D.C., 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for recurring monthly donations, please contact the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center at (202) 547-8189 or David Taboh at **[dtaboh@fop.net](mailto:dtaboh@fop.net)**.

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

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front



back







# BENEFITS OF FOP MEMBERSHIP

The National Fraternal Order of Police is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with over 373,000 members in more than 2,200 lodges. We are committed to improving the working conditions of officers and the safety of those we serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement and employee representation. Here's a quick overview of the wide variety of services and benefits that the FOP offers to its members.

## Legislative Office

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

## Legal Defense Plan

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

## Labor Services Division

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

## National Peace Officers' Memorial Service

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

## FOP Journal

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

## Disaster Relief

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

## Charity Partnerships

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

## Service Providers

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

## Education Services

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

## National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU)

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



For more information on all of these programs, visit [www.fop.net](http://www.fop.net).



# Labor Services: Looking Forward in 2026

Law enforcement is entering 2026 with major challenges that directly impact officer safety, bargaining power and longterm workforce stability. Here's a concise look at what lies ahead this year.

## Compensation Gaps and Pay Compression

Wages in many jurisdictions aren't keeping pace with inflation or rising living costs. Pay compression continues to shrink the gap between new hires and supervisors, weakening incentives for advancement. Unions are pushing for modernized pay structures that reward experience and leadership.

## Recruitment and Retention at Crisis Levels

Departments are struggling to fill vacancies while retirements and resignations remain high. Staffing shortages increase overtime, burnout and safety risks. Unions are advocating for hiring incentives, improved

benefits and stronger wellness programs to stabilize the workforce.

## Technology Outrunning Policy

AI tools, digital evidence systems and new surveillance technologies are being deployed faster than training and labor protections can keep up. Unions are working to ensure new tech is implemented responsibly, with negotiated training standards and safeguards against misuse.

## Public Trust and Political Volatility

Officers continue to operate under intense scrutiny and shifting accountability standards. Political pressure affects

working conditions and disciplinary processes. Unions remain essential in defending due process and ensuring fair, consistent treatment for members.

## Budget Constraints and Resource Shortages

Many agencies face stagnant or reduced budgets despite rising demands. Cuts affect staffing, training, equipment and wellness resources. Unions are pushing back against "do more with less" expectations and advocating for sustainable funding.

Contact **NFOP Labor Services** to join with our 184 bargaining units now to help you go into 2026. **FOP**

### Just the Facts:

**>> Law enforcement faces several challenges in 2026 that directly impact officer safety, bargaining power and longterm workforce stability. Some of these include compensation gaps and pay compression, recruitment and retention at crisis levels, technology outrunning policy and more.**

## LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

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

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



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# The Seventh Circuit Reinforces Brady/Giglio Due Process Protections



On December 31, 2025, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit held in *Randall N. Martin v. Robert A. Goldsmith* that Officer Martin adequately pleaded claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 based on allegations that law enforcement officials and prosecutors induced his resignation through misrepresentation and then disseminated *Brady/Giglio* disclosures outside the judicial process. The court's opinion offers guidance on the limits of absolute and qualified immunity, the protections afforded by procedural due process, and the consequences that arise when prosecutorial tools, particularly *Brady/Giglio* disclosures, are used outside their intended constitutional role.

The National Fraternal Order of Police filed an amicus brief in support of Officer Martin because the conduct of using prosecutorial and supervisory authority to undermine an officer's livelihood poses a direct threat to law enforcement officers nationwide. Recognizing the stakes, the NFOP urged the court to reject an expansive view of immunity that would allow officials to effectively end an officer's career, while insulating themselves from any meaningful accountability.

To briefly summarize the case, Officer Martin was employed by the Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Office. In 2020, he became the subject of an internal investigation stemming from an alleged use-of-force incident. That year, he became the subject of an internal investigation arising from an alleged use-of-force incident. Under Indiana law, Martin had the right to contest disciplinary charges before the Sheriff's Merit Board in a public hearing. According to Martin's complaint, once he invoked that right, Sheriff Robert Goldsmith took steps to restructure the process in ways that undermined its neutrality, including

## Just the Facts:

» In 2020, Officer Martin of the Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Office became the subject of an internal investigation stemming from an alleged use-of-force incident. Under Indiana law, Martin had the right to contest disciplinary charges before the Sheriff's Merit Board in a public hearing. According to Martin's complaint, once he invoked that right, Sheriff Robert Goldsmith took steps to restructure the process in ways that undermined its neutrality, including altering the composition of the merit board and the manner in which the investigation proceeded.

altering the composition of the merit board and the manner in which the investigation proceeded. Facing what he believed to be a biased process, Martin agreed to resign under an "agreement to resolve employment status." In exchange, the sheriff agreed to withdraw the disciplinary charges and provide a neutral employment reference stating that Martin resigned for personal reasons.

Martin alleged that those assurances were illusory. Immediately after his resignation became effective, Sheriff Goldsmith and two county prosecutors disseminated *Brady/Giglio* disclosures, accusing Martin of misconduct and credibility issues. These disclosures were not limited to filings in pending criminal cases. Instead, they were sent broadly to the Tippecanoe County Bar Association, Martin's then-current part-time employer, and a prospective employer. Martin alleged that the coordinated dissemination of these materials ensured he would be effectively unemployable in law enforcement, despite the promises made to induce his resignation. He filed suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, asserting that his resignation was coerced by material misrepresentation and that the defendants deprived him of a protected liberty interest in his reputation and career without due process of law. The district court dismissed

the case, concluding that the prosecutors were entitled to absolute and qualified immunity and that Martin's voluntary resignation foreclosed any procedural due process claim.

On appeal, the Seventh Circuit began by reaffirming an important principle: absolute prosecutorial immunity is limited to actions that are intimately associated with the judicial phase of the criminal process. Applying that standard, the court agreed that prosecutors are absolutely immune from filing *Brady/Giglio* disclosures in criminal cases in which Martin served as an arresting officer. Those filings, even if harmful to Martin's reputation, were part of the prosecutors' advocacy function and were, therefore, protected by absolute prosecutorial immunity.

The court rejected, however, the notion that absolute immunity extends to all uses of *Brady/Giglio* information, regardless of context. It distinguished disclosures made to courts and defense counsel in pending criminal cases from the dissemination of the same allegations to individuals or entities with no direct connection to any prosecution. Sending *Brady/Giglio* materials to a bar association

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## LEGAL COUNCIL

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or to an officer's current and prospective employers, the court explained, is not advocacy and is not "intimately associated" with the judicial process. In those circumstances, prosecutors act in an administrative or reputational capacity rather than a prosecutorial one, and absolute immunity does not apply. That conclusion is consistent with the NFOP's position that *Brady/Giglio* obligations cannot be transformed into a license to circulate damaging allegations outside the courtroom, particularly where doing so effectively blacklists an officer from future employment.

The Seventh Circuit also rejected the district court's conclusion that Officer Martin's resignation automatically defeated his due process claims. While voluntary resignation generally waives procedural protections, precedent also recognizes an exception where the resignation is induced by material misrepresentation or deception. Accepting Officer Martin's allegations as true at the pleading stage, the court held that he plausibly alleged that officials promised neutrality and confidentiality while secretly planning to disseminate damaging information. Under those

circumstances, the resignation could not be deemed voluntary as a matter of law. As the NFOP emphasized in its amicus brief, allowing public employers to evade due process simply by securing a resignation through false assurances would invite abuse in disciplinary systems nationwide.

After determining that absolute immunity did not apply to the dissemination of *Brady/Giglio* disclosures outside the context of pending criminal proceedings, the court turned to the question of qualified immunity. The Seventh Circuit concluded that the right not to be coerced into resigning through material misrepresentation was clearly established at the time of the alleged conduct. A reasonable official, the court explained, would have understood that inducing an officer's resignation with promises that were never intended to be honored, followed by actions that destroyed the officer's professional reputation, could violate due process. As a result, the court held that qualified immunity could not be resolved at the motion-to-dismiss stage for those claims and remanded the case for further proceedings.

Accordingly, this decision provides several important takeaways: immunity has limits, and procedural protections cannot be sidestepped through deception. The decision

underscores that *Brady/Giglio* disclosures cannot be weaponized to destroy an officer's career outside the courtroom.

It reinforces that resignations secured through false assurances are not automatically "voluntary," and that due process claims remain viable when material misrepresentations are involved. Most importantly, the decision affirms that accountability runs in both directions: while officers are subject to discipline and disclosure obligations, officials who misuse their authority to inflict reputational harm are not beyond the reach of the Constitution. **FOP**

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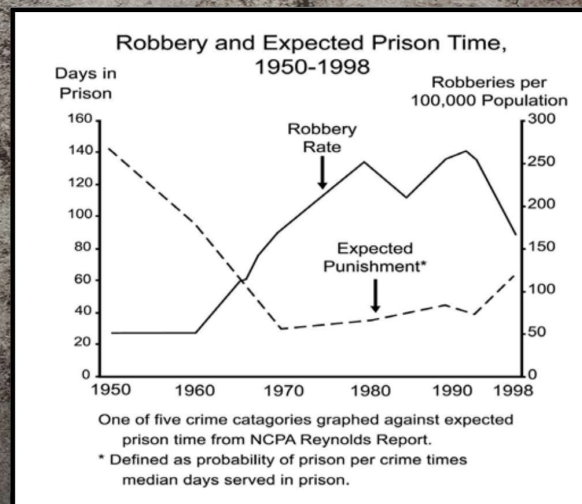
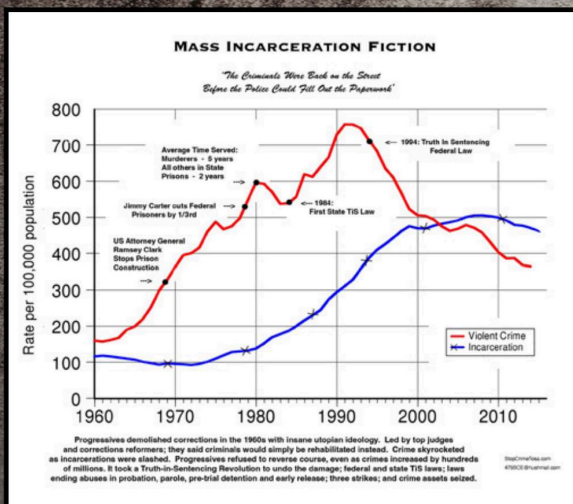
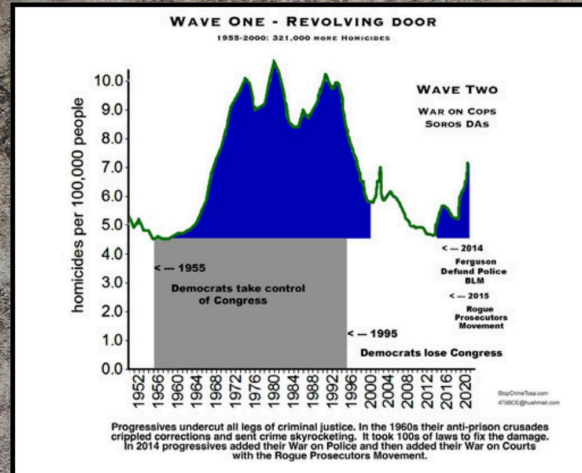
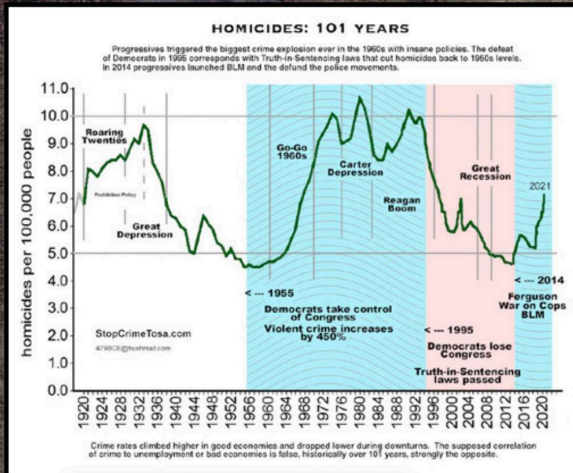


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# Thinking Beyond the Obvious: Who Should Attend Pathways to Excellence?



Over the past several months, I've been beating the drum loudly for **Pathways to Excellence** — and for good reason, as it is shaping up to be the premier FOP event of the year!

I want to congratulate those who paid attention to my enthusiasm and have already registered for one or more sessions. If you're still on the fence, let me offer a friendly reminder: don't procrastinate. Our hotel block is filling up quickly.

Recently, I had a conversation with one of our state presidents that perfectly captured why this event is so important — and why it deserves a broader way of thinking when it comes to attendance.

As we discussed the various components of **Pathways to Excellence**, he had a realization that shifted his entire perspective on the program.

He admitted that his initial focus had been somewhat limited. Like many of us, he was viewing the event through the lens of what he historically knew about Leadership Matters, and applying that framework to his future plans. Then it hit him — **Pathways to Excellence** offers far more than he had originally considered.

As he put it, he hadn't considered the value his state chaplains could gain by attending Excellency in Chaplaincy. That led him to think about the attorneys who represent his members and the benefits they could derive from participating in the **Legal Counselors Seminar**. From there, the conversation naturally moved to his labor representatives and the advantages of sending them to the **Labor Leadership Summit**.

Of course, we also discussed the **Wellness Summit**, which addresses some of the most pressing challenges facing law enforcement today, including officer suicide prevention and foundational wellness strategies. That discussion prompted another realization — his state

lodge had previously partnered with clinical psychologists, yet he was unaware that **Pathways to Excellence** includes a dedicated, one-day **Wellness Professionals Forum** specifically designed for them.

As the conversation continued, another important point surfaced: who can attend. He was surprised to learn

*This event is shaping up to be one of the premier experiences the FOP has to offer. The possibilities are truly unlimited.*

that many of the events within **Pathways to Excellence** are open to non-FOP members. While **Leadership Matters** has historically been a closed event limited to FOP membership, even that has evolved. We have invited non-members to attend as a recruitment opportunity, making

attendance far more flexible than many realize.

The takeaway is simple: think outside the box when considering who should attend one — or several — of the six events that make up **Pathways to Excellence**. There truly is something for everyone.

And don't let cost limit your vision. Many of the professionals we work with — attorneys, wellness experts and clinicians — often have their own professional development budgets. The real obstacle is not funding; it's awareness. Similarly, colleagues from other lodges may be willing and able to cover their own expenses if they understand the value of the opportunity. So, I encourage you to share these opportunities with everyone you network with.

This event is shaping up to be one of the premier experiences the FOP has to offer. The possibilities are truly unlimited. So, broaden your thinking on attendance, explore the opportunities available, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have ideas or special requests.

**Pathways to Excellence** is quickly becoming the must-attend FOP event of the year — and it's one you won't want to miss.

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

Turnery at [kturney@fop.org](mailto:kturney@fop.org), or (815) 482-5620. For more information on CRI-TAC, visit [cops.usdoj.gov/cri-tac](http://cops.usdoj.gov/cri-tac).



# PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

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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.



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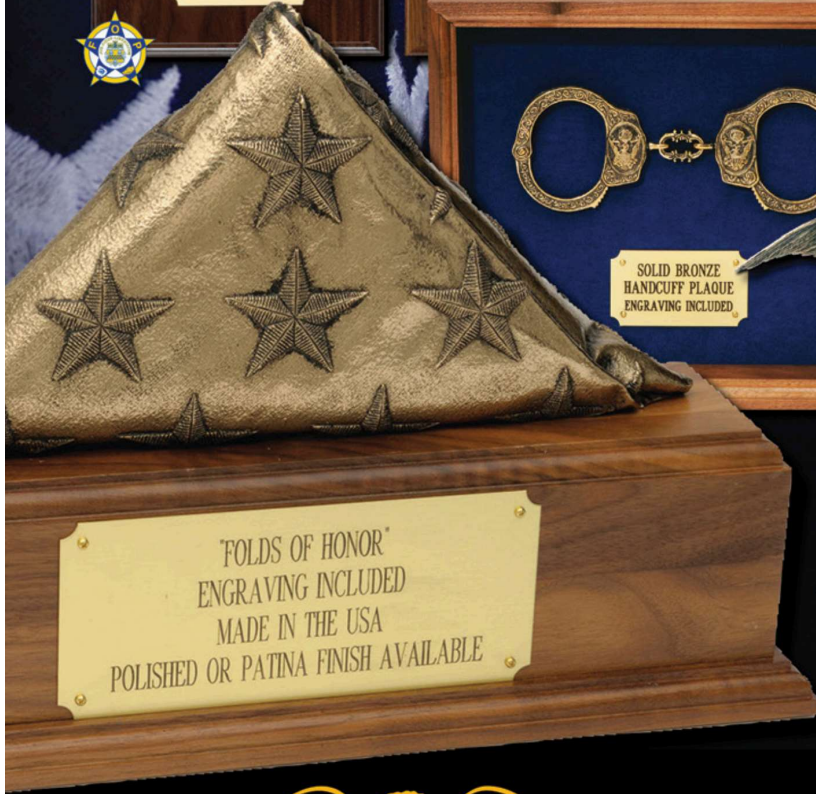
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