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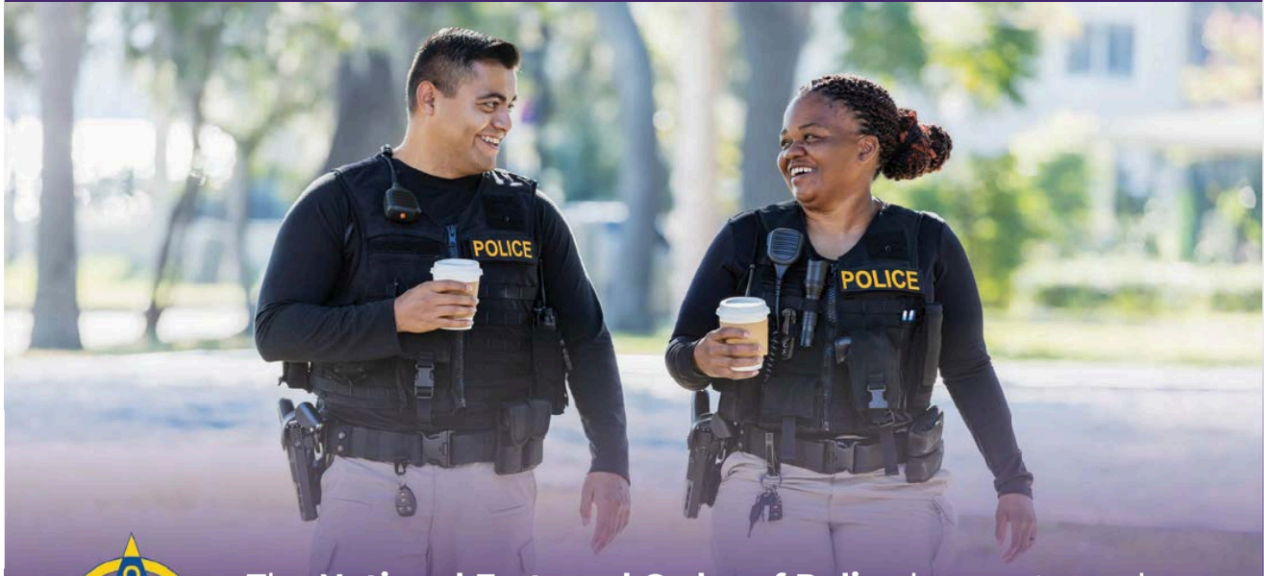
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Social Security Fairness Act Receives Third Hearing



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

The last time the Senate held a hearing on the Social Security Fairness Act was in November 2007. Last month, Senator Sherrod D. Brown (D-Ohio) — the sponsor of S. 597, the Social Security Fairness Act, and chairman of the Committee on Finance's Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy — chaired a field hearing in Columbus, Ohio, to hear from Ohioans who are negatively impacted by the gross unfairness of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Benefits earned by public employees over a lifetime are being taken away because of their public service.

This latest Senate Social Security Fairness Act hearing in Columbus is the third such hearing in this Congress this session. Capital City FOP Lodge #9 President Brian Steel represented

the FOP and did an excellent job voicing the frustrations of our members. Late last year, I testified at a House Ways and Means Committee

**You should receive
any benefit you
earn, and yet, all
across the country,
public servants are
denied theirs.**

hearing. Of the three hearings in this Congress, the FOP was the only law enforcement group testifying. At

present, the Security Fairness Act has 322 co-sponsors in the House and 58 co-sponsors in the Senate, a majority of both chambers.

In the course of working to repeal the WEP and GPO, we regularly encounter opposition from elected officials and academicians who are concerned about the long-term solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund or who worry that the cost of making the Social Security system fair for everyone is too great, but there is almost no one who denies that the current system is unfair to public employees or that existing pension systems for these employees should be scrapped in favor of enrolling in Social Security. Until the recent editorial in *The Toledo Blade*, that is, which was published the same day as Senator

Continued on page 14 >

Support the NFOP PAC!

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

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.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 12 >

Brown's hearing (see tinyurl.com/toledo-blade-editorial). According to the newspaper's editorial board, the effort to repeal the WEP and GPO and establish fairness for public employees who earn but are denied a benefit collected by all other employees is a "raid" on Social Security and "bipartisan vote buying."

This is objectively incorrect and, I think, wildly out of step with its readers and Ohioans. The Social Security Fairness Act has overwhelming and bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress — including both of Ohio's U.S. senators and 11 members of its House delegation. In December, the Ohio House of Representatives, led by State Representative Angie King (R-Celina), passed H.C.R. 6, urging Congress to repeal the WEP. To me, this sounds like the citizens of Ohio clearly recognize the manifest unfairness of the current system — especially considering 97% of public employees in the state are not covered by Social Security for their public service.

Here's what public employees in Ohio and everywhere else in our country know — the WEP is a penalty paid by public servants who **earned** a Social Security benefit while working

at jobs that required them and their employers to pay into Social Security. Strangely, *The Blade* focuses on arguing that Ohio's public servants are not "lifetime low-income workers" without recognizing that these workers **earned** the very same benefit that Ohio workers in the private sector earn regardless of their income level.

**Since when is
earning a wage or
a benefit deemed to
be "overly generous"
or considered
"extra income"?**

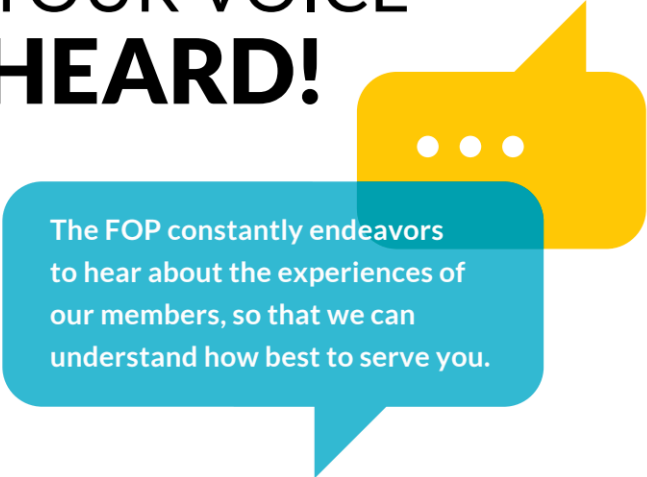
Somehow, the editorial board seems to think that paying public servants who also worked in the private sector and earned a Social Security benefit is "overly generous." Since when is earning a wage or a benefit deemed to be "overly generous" or considered "extra income"? The Social Security Administration does not impose a means test for any worker who earns

a Social Security benefit. Does the editorial board believe that Social Security should do so and simply transfer wealth from workers who earn higher salaries to those who are "lifetime low-income workers"? I think we can all agree that this is unfair — you should receive any benefit you earn, and yet, all across the country, public servants are denied theirs.

The editorial also seems to believe that public pension systems, such as the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund, should be abandoned, and that these public employers should instead enroll in the Social Security system — which the editorial board correctly notes will be unable to pay full benefits sometime in 2035 without meaningful reforms. Decades of mismanagement and congressional inaction, however, are not good reasons to push police, firefighters and teachers out of the state-run pension systems in Ohio or anywhere else, for that matter. This is very shortsighted and does nothing to contribute to the overall health of the Social Security system.

The editorial board of *The Blade* has it wrong. Workers who pay into Social Security at the same rate and over the same amount of time as their fellow citizens in the private sector should collect the same benefits, but they do not. That's wrong, it's unfair and it's time for Congress to correct it. **FOP**

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.

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

Happy Fourth of July, my brothers and sisters. This year marks the 248th anniversary of our country's declaration of independence from tyranny and oppression. Through the years, our great nation has shown resilience in the face of adversity, been victorious in preserving freedoms and presented opportunities to its citizens second to no other nation. At the core of the success of our nation and its people is our noble profession of law enforcement. We have always been and will continue to be the "thin blue line" that separates chaos from order. Even when it appears that society is turning its back on us, we persevere.

According to a recent Gallup poll, "overall, 77% of Americans say that their most recent interaction with a member of their local police force was a positive experience, 85% say they were treated fairly and 84% say they were treated with respect." In contrast, a September 2023 Pew Research Center report stated that "about seven-in-ten Americans (72%) say they have an unfavorable view of Congress." I am sure this is the reason why every politician seeks the FOP endorsement. The bottom line is that I am sure, like me, you are proud to be an American, to serve as a law enforcement officer and to be an FOP member. Happy birthday, America.

We are fortunate to have Director of Wellness Sherri Martin on our staff. She has been on the forefront of helping our members receive the best training and, in some cases, treatment for maintaining mental wellness. We are equally grateful to have National FOP Chaplain Rick Snyder as our spiritual advisor. Brother Rick offers us guidance, counsel and comfort when called upon. It is greatly important for us to maintain a

well-balanced life, physically, mentally and spiritually. But what so many of us are remiss in doing is taking care of our overall physical well-being and addressing issues before they become major obstacles.

May was Women's Health Month and June was Men's Health Month. These health awareness months were created to remind us to get screenings and diagnostics for maintaining good health and identifying potential problems. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), women are 33% more likely to visit a doctor than men, and women are 100% better at maintaining screenings and preventive care. The two main reasons men give for not scheduling annual appointments are that they are too busy and they are afraid they will find out something is seriously wrong. These are not good justifications to avoid screenings.

As law enforcement officers, we have endured physical abuse over the years from exposure to harsh weather conditions, caustic fumes and substances, and physical trauma to just about every part of our bodies. This is in addition to the stress of the job, sleep deprivation and poor nutritional habits. These events add up and, in most cases, years go by until major issues are discovered. Unfortunately, in many cases, the prognoses are not favorable once the problem has been identified. Early detection and intervention would save many of our brothers and sisters from agonizing disabilities or even worse.

Using myself as an example, I go at least twice a year to the dentist, see my primary physician twice a year with full blood work conducted and visit a cardiologist once a year for a checkup.

I also go to the dermatologist twice a year, have a colonoscopy every three years and see both a pulmonologist and an orthopedic physician annually. Now I would like to tell you that I initiated all these diagnostics, but I didn't ... my wife did. She says she wants to keep me around for a while. Though I certainly could do a better job at eating right, watching my weight and exercising more frequently, I am in pretty good health and take no medications. I attribute my overall good well-being to addressing issues before they become major problems.

Brothers, have your heart, lungs, prostate and colon checked regularly. Sisters, have your heart, lungs, breasts, cervix and colon checked regularly. Early detection and intervention are the keys to eliminating or at least controlling disease and its spread. To my brothers and sisters still on the job, don't be reluctant to file workers' compensation reports for injuries or exposures, no matter how minor they may seem at the time. I know of others, including myself, who received what seemed at the time to be a minor injury, only for it to develop into something more serious years later. By not having the injury or exposure documented, the cost of correcting it, as well as the medication and rehabilitation, fell on me. The bottom line is that you are responsible to yourself and your family to ensure you are around for a good long time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Only you can do that.

Many local and state lodges, as well as the National FOP, have screening providers that conduct health screenings. Most are free or very low in cost. Take advantage of these programs.

Be safe out there, and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. **FOP**



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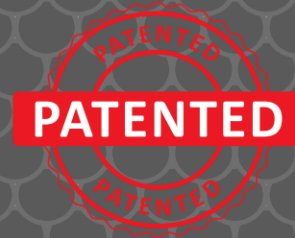
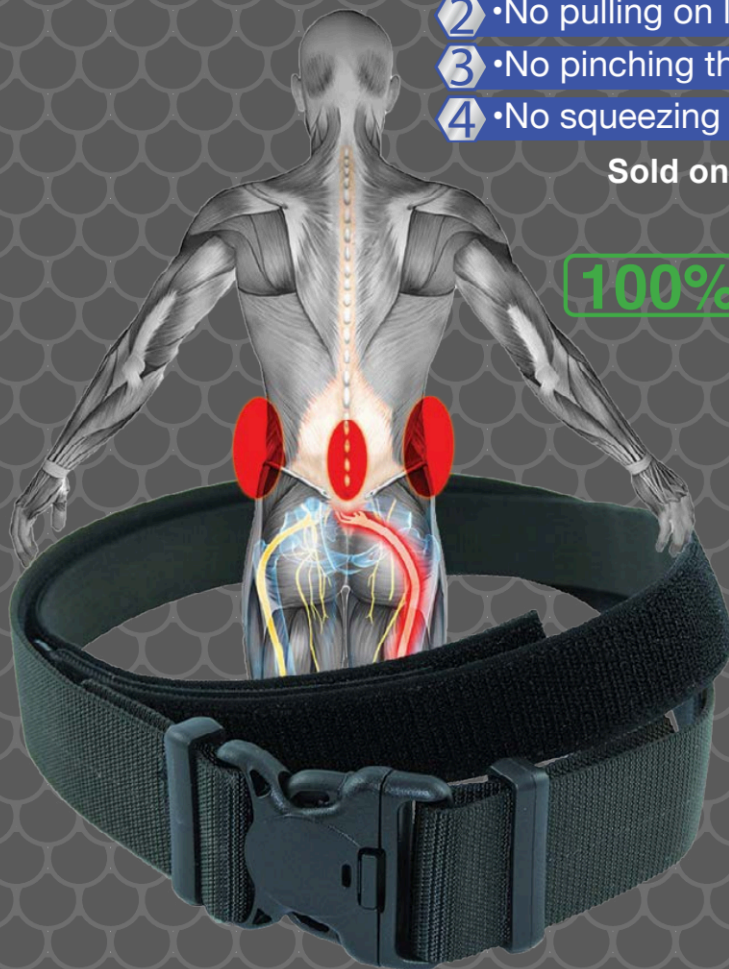
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UPCOMING EVENTS

FOP CALENDAR

National FOP Fall Presidents Meeting

September 5, 2024

Charlotte, NC

Registration: tinyurl.com/yh9mu852

Lodging: tinyurl.com/436wzwjv

National FOP Fall Board Meeting

September 6–7, 2024

Charlotte, NC

Registration: tinyurl.com/yh9mu852

Lodging: tinyurl.com/436wzwjv

Collective Bargaining Seminar

October 22–24, 2024

Las Vegas, NV

Information and

registration: tinyurl.com/h9ajw58c

Law Enforcement Leaders Labor Summit

February 11–12, 2025

Las Vegas, NV

Save the date

Legal Counselors Seminar

February 13–14, 2025

Las Vegas, NV

Save the date

Officer Wellness Summit

February 17–18, 2025

Nashville, TN

Save the date

Leadership Matters

February 20–22, 2025

Nashville, TN

Save the date

2024 Collective Bargaining Seminar

Horseshoe, Las Vegas, October 22–24

Presented by the National FOP Labor Coalition, this seminar has been helping labor leaders and units stay on top of their game when it comes to bargaining for their members for the past 23 years! It offers tools for those who are new to collective bargaining and is also a great refresher for experienced negotiators. The seminar features hands-on training that combines role-playing activities with classroom instruction. Supported by experienced

National FOP negotiators, you will be engaged in using actual bargaining techniques and strategies in a classroom environment.

Who should attend: All law enforcement bargaining teams and those who desire to be on a law enforcement bargaining team. All individuals who need to learn the bargaining process in an environment that promotes and teaches good bargaining strategies and tactics.

Limited seating available! Register today at national.fop.net/2024collectivebargaining

2025 Law Enforcement Leaders Labor Summit and Legal Counselors Seminar

Planet Hollywood, Las Vegas, February 11–12 and February 13–14

Save the date! The Labor Summit will be held February 11–12, and the Legal Seminar will follow on February 13–14. These events will feature presentations and discussions on a wide variety of issues and topics that impact law enforcement labor leaders and legal counselors and the officers they represent. Attendees of the Legal Seminar will be able to earn up to 12 CLE credits. More information to follow.

Topics and Discussions

- Developments in public safety labor issues
- Artificial intelligence and law enforcement policy
- Panel discussion on current labor issues and negotiations
- Improving the future of policing
- Artificial intelligence in policing today
- Overview and update on civilian review boards
- The “just cause” standard
- Decisions regarding police actions
- General counsel comprehensive overview on issues affecting law enforcement **FOP**





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 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.



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

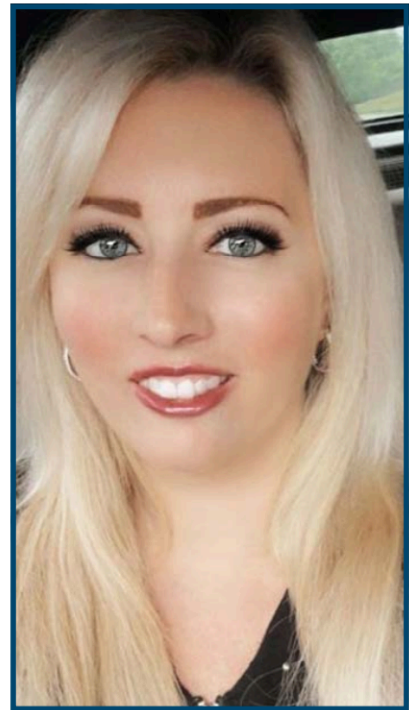
LABOR SERVICES EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Brittany Steinhauer

Brittany Steinhauer joined the NFOP Labor Services Division in July 2023, bringing with her an extensive background in research and an exceptional attention to detail. Her meticulous approach and dedication to her work have quickly made her a valuable asset to the Data Entry Team.

In her first year, Brittany demonstrated a remarkable ability to handle a busy workload with precision and efficiency. Her contributions have significantly enhanced the team's performance, showcasing her skills and commitment.

The NFOP Labor Services Division is proud to have Brittany on board, and we look forward to her continued success and contributions to the team. Thank you, Brittany, for your hard work and dedication! **FOP**



Save the Date!



Scan the QR code to stay up to date on all Conference Information

Convention will be held at the Miami Beach Convention Center

Hotel & Entertainment Package Information will be coming Soon!

HELPS Federal Tax Break for Retired Police, Fire and EMS Personnel

JAMES MCNAMEE / ILLINOIS PUBLIC PENSION FUND ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT AND RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Retired law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel may reduce their taxable earnings by up to \$3,000 for medical insurance premiums paid during a calendar year. This is allowable under the Health-care Enhancement for Local Public Safety Retirees Act, or the HELPS Retirees Act.

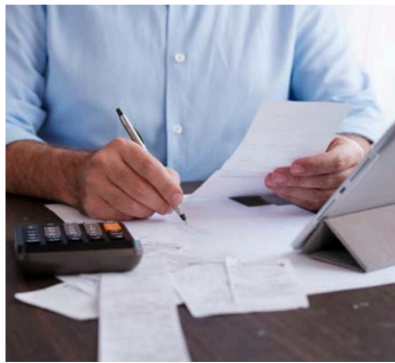
Previously, there was a requirement that the premium had to be deducted from the retiree's pension check in order to qualify for HELPS deduction. That is no longer the case following the 2022 adoption of the Secure 2.0 retirement law. Premiums paid directly for health, accident or long-term care insurance now qualify for the benefit.

The \$3,000 reduction does not appear on the annual 1099-R form that is sent out by a pension fund. The retiree must claim the reduction on his or her personal 1040 tax form on line 5b or similar adjustment. Instructions on claiming the reduction are included on page 6 in the 2023 version of IRS Publication 575: Pension and Annuity Income (see irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p575.pdf). This page reference may change in 2024 or future editions. The section of the publication that deals with the HELPS credit is reprinted at the end of this article.

As noted in the IRS publication, a retiree may not use this credit for income that is already excluded from taxation. So if a retired officer gets their medical coverage through a new employer or their spouse's employer plan, that premium deduction is likely excluded from income, so no HELPS reduction would be allowed. Likewise, if a retiree is self-employed and takes a Schedule C or similar deduction for medical coverage, then the HELPS credit cannot be used.

It is recommended that pensioners consult with their tax preparer to properly claim the reduction.

Note that married couples where both the parties are retired police, fire or EMS may take a reduction in income of up to \$6,000. Finally, the HELPS tax break is not available to surviving spouses of retired or active law enforcement.



The existence of this tax break is not well known, and your National FOP does not want it going unused by any retired law enforcement officer or other qualified public safety professional.

**The existence of
this tax break is not
well known, and your
National FOP does not
want it going unused
by any retired law
enforcement officer.**

Below is a reprint of the section of IRS Publication 575 (2023 version) that discusses insurance premiums for retired public safety officers.

Insurance Premiums for Retired Public Safety Officers

If you are an eligible retired public safety officer (law enforcement officer, firefighter, chaplain, or member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew who is retired because of disability or because

you reached normal retirement age), you can elect to exclude from income distributions made from your eligible retirement plan that are used to pay the premiums for coverage by an accident or health plan or a long-term care insurance contract. The premiums can be for coverage for you, your spouse, or dependents.

The distribution must be from the plan maintained by the employer from which you retired as a public safety officer. The distribution can be made directly from the plan to the provider of the accident or health plan or long-term care insurance contract, or the distribution can be made to you to pay to the provider of the accident or health plan or long-term care insurance contract.

You can exclude from income the smaller of the amount of the insurance premiums or \$3,000. You can make this election only for amounts that would otherwise be included in your income. The amount excluded from your income can't be used to claim a medical expense deduction.

An eligible retirement plan is a governmental plan that is a:

- Qualified trust,
- Section 403(a) plan,
- Section 403(b) annuity, or
- Section 457(b) plan.

If you make this election, reduce the otherwise taxable amount of your pension or annuity by the amount excluded. The amount shown in box 2a of Form 1099-R doesn't reflect this exclusion. Report your total distributions on Form 1040, 1040-SR, or 1040-NR, line 5a. Report the taxable amount on Form 1040, 1040-SR, or 1040-NR, line 5b. Enter "PSO" next to the appropriate line on which you report the taxable amount.

If you are retired on disability and reporting your disability pension on Form 1040, 1040-SR, or 1040-NR, line 1h, include only the taxable amount on that line and enter "PSO" and the amount excluded on the dotted line next to the applicable line. **FOP**



Officer Mental Health & the Law: Key Issues

SHERRI MARTIN / DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS

One of the primary missions of the National Fraternal Order of Police is to advocate for members of law enforcement through legislative efforts. With increased focus on officer mental health and well-being in the past decade, changes in legislation related to officer health have arisen on both state and national levels. Naturally, the FOP is focused on the impacts of these changes in legislation and the rise of new legislation in this area. The Division of Wellness Services wants to make sure that our members are informed about the issues. Here are the areas we are focused on regarding legislation related to officer health and wellness efforts.

PTSD Presumption Under Workers' Compensation

Coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been a high-profile topic in the workers' compensation industry for some time. Accepted as a clinical diagnosis in 1980, PTSD was originally linked to combat veterans in the military, but the exposures endured by first responders — firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), police officers and paramedics — who have witnessed serious accidents, deaths and traumatic events has also been recognized. It is now widely accepted that first responders are susceptible

to significant exposure to trauma, and the prevalence of PTSD diagnoses in these occupations is higher than in the general population.

A presumption is a legal presupposition or benefit of doubt that is required if certain conditions are met in a workers' compensation claim. Most legal presumptions related to PTSD are rebuttable, a legal principle that presumes something to be true unless proven otherwise. (The burden of proof would lie with any party who wishes to rebut.) Beginning in 2017, states began to include an explicit PTSD presumption for first responders in statute. Presumption laws for PTSD (and some other non-mental-health conditions) in workers' compensation have greatly expanded in the years since then, with over half of the states passing laws to cover these conditions for first responders.

Unfortunately, some states still do not provide this protection or coverage for officers. Other states are in various stages of proposing and passing legislation on the issue but have not reached the finish line. **Challenges to proposed legislation covering PTSD under workers' compensation have hinged on anticipated high costs of treatment or worries about abuse of the presumption. PTSD is a complicated diagnosis, and symptoms often don't appear until well after**

the exposure to the traumatic event. Some insurers claim that a PTSD diagnosis is “subjective evidence” since it cannot be proved by traditional medical practices such as an MRI or X-ray. Others doubt the diagnosis because the employee may be able to work for months or years after the traumatic event and appear to be fine. We know that our officers need and deserve this coverage, as there is no question that the job exposes us to a greater frequency of traumatic events. It is only appropriate that states work to provide treatment to officers in return for their service.

Protected Speech for Peer Support

Based on findings of the FOP Biennial Critical Issues in Policing Survey series, peer support is the number one most effective and most desired resource for officers when they are in need of mental health support. Simply put, officers trust other officers and want to talk to someone who understands their struggles.


One of the primary concerns surrounding seeking help is confidentiality. Most officers would rather go it alone than have their agency or their co-workers know that they are struggling. For that reason, keeping conversations confidential is a cornerstone of effective peer support. However, without legal protection, even trained peer supporters don’t enjoy the privileges of protecting private conversations as you might think.

There are stark differences between confidentiality and privileged communication. Confidentiality basically constitutes a promise that information discussed in peer support interactions will be kept private. Privileged communication means that the information discussed is legally protected, much like protections extended to conversations with doctors, spouses and clergy. Peer supporters who aren’t protected by legislation mandating that their conversations with supported peers are privileged may be subject to being compelled to disclose the content of peer support interactions.

Clearly, privileged communication protections for peer support significantly increase confidence in the process, which will undoubtedly translate into higher rates of use of peer support services. If we want to encourage officers to use peer support services where they are available, we must ensure that peer support conversations will be kept private and cannot be accessed for use against the officer. Twenty-one states have now enacted legislation that legally protects speech between law enforcement peer supporters and the officers they support. Many other states are working on similar laws. We will keep fighting for this until it applies in all states.

Mandated Wellness Visits

As increased focus is put on officer mental health, some states have begun to mandate that officers undergo regular visits with a professional mental health provider. While this is a fairly new legislative issue, there has been much variability between states where it has been mandated. Some states



We have been highly engaged in educating members about the proper components of any mandated wellness visit policy or legislation.

mandate it annually, while others less often, with varying directives on who is financially responsible for the visit and what the visits must include. The FOP has been laser-focused on this issue, hosting presentations at the annual FOP Wellness Summit to explore the issue.

While some states that have enacted the practice have put in place seemingly effective processes aimed at providing the officer with mental health support and resources, other states have either been vague about the process or lent the idea that the visit is evaluative in nature, leading it to appear as more of a “fitness-for-duty” type evaluation. The FOP has been vocal in officer wellness and mental health circles, imploring policymakers to ensure that any mandates for regular mental health visits completely exclude any evaluative component that might cause an officer to fear that visiting with the mental health professional could be detrimental to their career. We encourage the use of the term “wellness visit” to indicate that the purposes of the appointment are to build a relationship with a mental health provider, receive educational information about the possible effects of exposure to trauma and stress, and to increase awareness of services available to the officer and their families if they are in need of mental health support. We have been highly engaged in educating members about the proper components of any mandated wellness visit policy or legislation. We are also encouraging leaders to get involved in the process of constructing mandates in their respective states, if applicable.

As always, we encourage our members to reach out to the Division of Wellness Services with any questions or for further information about these priorities. Information is power, and it is our aim to ensure that all of our members are equipped to care for themselves and all of our members. Be well! **FOP**

RESOURCES

Gerber & Holder. (n.d.). Work-Related PTSD: A State-by-State Breakdown of Workers’ Compensation Laws. Retrieved June 21, 2024, at gerberholderlaw.com/workers-comp-ptsd-by-state.

International Association of Chiefs of Police. (n.d.). Officer Wellness Dashboard — Legislative Protections and Training Requirements. Retrieved June 21, 2024, at theiacp.org/resources/document/officer-wellness-dashboard-legislative-protections-training-requirements.

National Council on Compensation Insurance (2019). Regulatory and Legislative Trends Report. Retrieved June 21, 2024, at ncci.com/Articles/Documents/II_Regulatory-Legislative-Trends2019.pdf.

FUN IN THE SUN

Sunshine and vitamin D go hand in hand. Fresh air, gardening and outdoor activities are all symbols of good health. But too much sun can be dangerous, especially as you age. Luckily, there are lots of ways to keep yourself safe while enjoying the great outdoors.

Save Your Skin

Try to avoid direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you must be outside during these hours, here's how to further protect yourself:

- **Apply sunscreen** that is water-resistant and SPF 30 or better 20 to 30 minutes before you go out in the sun. Reapply at least every two hours or immediately after swimming or heavy sweating.
- **Wear sun-safe clothing** that covers your arms and legs. If you can see through the fabric, so can the sun. Keep clothes loose fitting to help you stay cool.
- **Wear a hat** with a wide brim to shade your face and neck.
- **Wear UV-blocking sunglasses** to protect your eyes.
- **Find a shady spot** to take a break.

Keep Your Cool When Things Get Hot

Spending too much time in the heat without cool-down breaks can lead to heat stroke. Some of the symptoms for heat stroke may include:

- Body temperature of 104 F (40 C) or higher
- Confusion, agitation, slurred speech, irritability
- Nausea and vomiting
- Flushed skin
- Rapid breathing
- Racing heart rate
- Headache

Call **9-1-1** right away if you suspect someone is having a heat stroke. While waiting for help to arrive, you should:

- Create shade or move to a shady spot
- Remove any excess clothing to let the skin breathe
- Apply cold water to the head, chest, armpits and groin

Aetna 24-Hour Nurse Line

This 24-hour line provides access to registered nurses who can help answer your health questions and with things such as:

- Deciding whether to visit a doctor or urgent care
- Understanding your symptoms
- Managing chronic conditions
- Learning about treatment options and medical procedures

Call **(800) 556-1555 (TTY: 711)**, available 24/7.



Resources for Living

This voluntary service is part of your Aetna Medicare Advantage plan, so there is no additional cost to you. You would only pay the cost for any service you decide to use.

- Emotional well-being support — meet with a counselor online or by phone to talk about what's on your mind.
- Everyday needs — consultants can help you solve issues by connecting you with local companies that can provide services like cleaning services, home repair and more.
- Get help in finding social and recreational activities.
- The program is also available to support your caregivers.

Disclaimer: Resources for Living is the brand name used for products and services offered through the Aetna group of subsidiary companies.

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FOP.AetnaMedicare.com FOP

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



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Columbia Southern University

Columbia Southern University is a leading educational institution for public safety across the globe. The university offers higher education in many areas of law enforcement, homeland security and emergency management, as well as business, information technology, human resources and more. Whether you are considering extending your education for your current career or are interested in switching it up, CSU has more than 100 online degree programs in its catalog.

Who Is Columbia Southern University?

Founded in 1993 and based in Orange Beach, Alabama, CSU offers online higher education at the associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels.

Committed to the adult learning experience, CSU's courses are 100% online and offer LifePace Learning, an enrollment option that combines the flexibility of online classes with a time-based structure. Whether students are studying between shifts or at home, they can access courses 24/7, complete classes early and can choose from 11 start dates each year.

CSU ranks in the top 1% of colleges for affordability.* In fact, nearly two-thirds (65%) of CSU's recent graduates finished their degrees with zero student loan debt.**

Degree Programs

CSU offers criminal justice degree programs at the associate, bachelor's and master's degree levels. In addition, CSU features concentrations in areas such as arson investigation and forensics.

CSU also provides bachelor's and master's degree programs in homeland



security that address a wide range of course topics including counterterrorism, border management, immigration, cybernetworks, critical infrastructure and disaster resilience.

CSU's Emergency Management bachelor's and master's degree programs are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed within the field of emergency management.

Aware of the growing threats from hacking, ransomware, identity theft and more, CSU provides a bachelor's degree in information technology and cyber security with a concentration in homeland security. This level of modern education is meant to help today's law enforcement prepare for and secure citizens from tomorrow's newest online threats.***

Scholarships

The university offers financial assistance for students and their spouses and family via several scholarships, including the Criminal Justice Scholarship, Learning Partner Scholarship and Hero Behind the Hero Scholarship.

Columbia Southern University is a proud member of the National Fraternal Order of Police University Consortium.

CSU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). For a complete list of degrees and more information about Columbia Southern University, visit columbiasouthern.edu or call (800) 977-8449 ext. 1359. **FOP**

*Based on tuition and fees compared to four-year U.S. colleges with the largest fully-distance enrollment (IPEDS 2022 Fall Enrollment Survey).

**Data calculated from internal Columbia Southern University financial data, based on 65.1% with zero student loan debt from the graduating classes of 2021-2023.

***Multiple factors, including prior experience, geography and degree field, affect career outcomes. CSU does not guarantee a job, promotion, salary increase, eligibility for a position or other career growth. Eligibility for careers in law enforcement vary widely by jurisdiction, and the university makes no promise or guarantee that the completion of its program would qualify a graduate to seek employment in law enforcement in any particular jurisdiction.

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



Charles Town, WV



San Diego, CA



Arlington, VA



Williamsburg, KY



Ashland, OH



Rosemont, PA



Adelphi, MD



Fayette, IA



Orange Beach, AL



Tiffin, OH



Olivet, MI



Minneapolis, MN



Romeoville, IL



Cincinnati, OH



San Diego, CA



Wichita, KS

Advancing the Social Security Fairness Act and Other Priority Legislation



Senate Holds Hearing on Social Security Fairness Act

Senator Sherrod D. Brown (D-Ohio), sponsor of S. 597, the Social Security Fairness Act, and chairman of the Committee on Finance's Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy, chaired a hearing early last month in Columbus, Ohio, entitled "Keeping the Promise of Social Security for Ohio's First Responders and Public Servants." Brian Steel, president of FOP Capital City Lodge #9, was a witness and provided testimony to the panel (see tinyurl.com/brian-steel-testimony). The last time the Senate held a hearing on this issue was in November 2007.

Both before and after this important hearing, the staff in the Washington, D.C., office has intensified its efforts to build support for S. 597, the Social Security Fairness Act, in the Senate. Since the last issue of the *Journal*, we have added five new co-sponsors in the Senate: Senators Cardin (D-Md.), Coons (D-Del.), Durbin (D-Ill.), Warner (D-Va.) and Wyden (D-Ore.). Senator Wyden is a particularly important co-sponsor, as he is the chairman of the Committee on Finance, which has jurisdiction over the legislation. I also spoke personally with Senator Cruz (R-Texas) about the legislation and urged him to support the bill to benefit the thousands of Texas law enforcement officers and families who are impacted by these unfair penalties.

This brings our total number of co-sponsors to 58, meaning that, counting the bill's sponsor, Senator Brown, we are one co-sponsor away from having 60 co-sponsors, a key number for advancing the legislation in the Senate. This is

Just the Facts:

» The FOP testified at the Senate's hearing on S. 597, the Social Security Fairness Act, in Columbus, Ohio, in June. Staff in the D.C. office continue to intensify its efforts to build support for the legislation, which now has overwhelming support from both chambers of Congress. The House considered and passed H.R. 8070, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, and the House Committee on Homeland Security reported multiple bills favorably to the floor that the FOP has been monitoring. The Senate also passed S. 3984, the Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act, by unanimous consent. Additionally, the FOP's National Legislative Office has developed a model questionnaire to assist state and local lodges in evaluating federal candidates for Congress in the 2024 election cycle.

the most co-sponsors we have ever had on our Senate bill.

In addition to the senators identified in the June issue of the *Journal*, we also have written and met with staff in the offices of the following senators:

- Shelley M. Capito (R-W.Va.)
- Thomas R. Carper (D-Del.)
- Christopher A. Coons (D-Del.)
- Ted Cruz (R-Texas)
- Steven D. Daines (R-Mont.)
- Ronald H. Johnson (R-Wis.)
- James P. Lankford (R-Okla.)
- Joseph Manchin III (D-W.Va.)
- Mark R. Warner (D-Va.)
- Todd C. Young (R-Ind.)

As a result of our efforts, Senators Coons and Warner are now co-sponsors. We are cautiously optimistic that at least one of the remaining eight senators we have reached out to will agree to co-sponsor the legislation.

We strongly urge our members in West Virginia, Delaware, Montana, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and Indiana to reach out to their senator(s) listed above and ask them to co-sponsor S. 597! Hearing from their constituents at home is very important — especially with elections coming up.

In the House, we now have 322 co-sponsors and, as reported in the previous issue of the *Journal*, the active support of the Problem Solvers Caucus, a group of more than 60 members of the House who are dedicated to solving problems using a bipartisan approach to the issues (see tinyurl.com/problem-solvers-caucus).

We remain in regular communication with the sponsors of H.R. 82, Representatives Garret N. Graves (R-La.) and Abigail D. Spanberger (D-Va.). Both of these members recently expressed optimism that the Ways and Means Committee may put the bill on its agenda this month.

It is vital that we retain our momentum, especially in the Senate, so visit congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/597/cosponsors to see if your Senators are co-sponsors and congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/82/cosponsors for members of the House. These offices must hear from their constituents on this issue if we're to successfully get these provisions repealed!

Continued on page 30 »

FOP JOURNAL // JULY 2024



The FOP Store

Duty Calls, Summer Answers



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Top Priorities in Brief

H.R. 82/S. 597, the Social Security Fairness Act

House: 322 co-sponsors (112 R, 210 D)

Senate: 59 co-sponsors (46 D, 10 R, 3 I)

Urge Congress to pass it:
tinyurl.com/ycxk63pay

H.R. 1322/S. 1658, the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act

House: 86 co-sponsors (22 R, 64 D)

Senate: 3 co-sponsors (2 R, 1 D)

Urge Congress to pass it:
tinyurl.com/37afz34h

H.R. 3539, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act

House: 59 co-sponsors (11 R, 48 D)

Senate: Not yet introduced

Urge Congress to pass it:
tinyurl.com/5h6mtmvt

H.R. 354/S. 1462, the LEOSA Reform Act

House: 43 co-sponsors (43 R)

Senate: 5 co-sponsors (5 R)

Urge Congress to pass it:
tinyurl.com/3w4br4sj

H.R. 743/S. 4258, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 116 co-sponsors (100 R, 16 D)

Senate: 19 co-sponsors (18 R, 1 D)

Urge Congress to pass it:
tinyurl.com/3uzdafpk

H.R. 3170/S. 1514, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act

House: 138 co-sponsors (44 R, 94 D)

Senate: 25 co-sponsors (7 R, 17 D, 1 I)

Urge Congress to pass it:
tinyurl.com/48vxkdp4

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

WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 28 >

2024 Model Questionnaire Is Now Available!

The staff in the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center developed a model questionnaire to assist state and local lodges in evaluating federal candidates for the U.S. Congress in the 2024 election cycle (see tinyurl.com/2024-candidate-questionnaire). The questions draw from issues being actively lobbied by the National FOP in Washington, D.C., and includes all of our top legislative priorities.

It is particularly important for the state and local lodges to endorse candidates who support our top priority items and to publicly oppose those candidates who do not. The success of the National Legislative Program depends on having an active grassroots base and on electing lawmakers who support our pro-law-enforcement agenda.

If your state or local lodges do make an endorsement, please contact the National Legislative Office and let us know!

Other Legislative Activity

President Biden announced several executive actions to address border security and immigration (see tinyurl.com/executive-actions). These actions allow the federal government to temporarily shut down the border and prevent asylum claims at a particular port of entry when the average number of daily encounters tops 2,500. This announcement was accompanied by an interim final rule issued by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security that restricts asylum claims for noncitizens. This rule will allow immigration officials the ability to quickly remove individuals they encounter.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Garland v. Cargill* and invalidated a federal rule, promulgated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), that outlawed bump stocks. The original rule, which went into effect under the Trump administration in 2019, considered "bump stocks" to fall within the definition of "machine gun" under federal law, making them unlawful to possess.

The Supreme Court has now rejected this definition and the devices are no longer prohibited.

The House considered and adopted H. Res. 1292 on a party-line vote, which holds the U.S. attorney general in contempt of Congress for refusing to release an audio recording of the transcript of President Biden's interview by a special counsel investigating his handling of certain classified documents. The matter has been referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, D.C., and is unlikely to proceed any further.

The House also considered and passed H.R. 8070, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, on a 217-199 vote. The bill would provide nearly \$833 billion for the Department of Defense, an increase of \$8 billion from last year. The bill will be transmitted to the Senate for further action, and the D.C. staff will continue to monitor the legislation.

The House Committee on Homeland Security reported multiple bills favorably to the floor that the FOP has been monitoring, including:

- H.R. 4547, the Cooperation on Combating Human Smuggling and Trafficking Act
- H.R. 6229, the DHS Special Events Program and Support Act
- H.R. 8658, the DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act
- H.R. 8644, the DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act
- H.R. 8671, the DHS Intelligence Rotational Assignment Program and Law Enforcement Support Act
- H.R. 8575, the Repair of the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System Act of 2024

The Senate passed S. 3984, the Countering Threats and Attacks on Our Judges Act, by unanimous consent. The bill would amend the State Justice Institute Act of 1984 to authorize the State Justice Institute to provide awards to certain organizations to establish a state judicial threat intelligence and resource center.

Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.), chairman of the Committee on the

Judiciary, and seven other members of that committee sent a letter to the Bureau of Prisons, urging them to request a special pay rate for critical employees to help address severe staffing shortages in BOP facilities (see tinyurl.com/bop-letter). The FOP has addressed this issue in several previous letters over the years on increasing locality pay and spotlighting the negative impact on officer morale and safety at specific facilities (see fop.net/letter/us-penitentiary-thomson).

Since the last issue of the *Journal*, the FOP has supported the following legislation:

- H.R. 8420, the Filling Public Safety Vacancies Act, which would provide a one-time boost of \$162 million for the hiring program administered by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)
- S. 2982, the Targeting Online Sales of Fentanyl Act, which would direct the Government Accountability Office to investigate the methods used to enable online sales of the drug and assess the procedures and efforts

of federal law enforcement and online providers in combating online sales of fentanyl

- S. 4142, the Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act, which would increase the offense level of smuggling contraband cell-phones into federal prisons from a misdemeanor to a felony
- S. 4255, the Law Enforcement Innovate to De-Escalate Act, which would clarify that a device which expels a projectile by the action of the explosive should not be regulated or taxed as a firearm if — and only if — it is not designed or intended to be lethal and the projectile's velocity is less than 500 feet per second
- S. 4534, the National Human Trafficking Database Act, which would create a national human trafficking database within the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Read the Weekly Update to Get the Latest News!

If you aren't receiving the *Weekly*

Update from Capitol Hill in your inbox every week, go to tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update to sign up. It helps to keep you and your members up to date with the latest news from Washington, D.C.

Please be a regular visitor to all of 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)

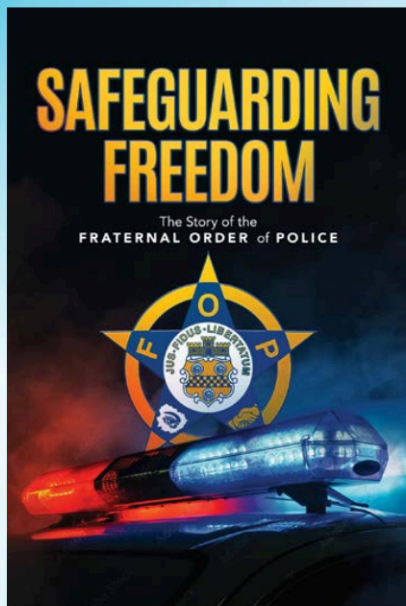
Do your part! Please **share**, **comment** and **like** our content.

Check Out the FOP's YouTube Channel and The Blue View Podcast!

The FOP's YouTube channel (youtube.com/GLFOP) hosts every episode of the FOP's podcast, entitled *The Blue View*, as well as news clips, interviews and our FOP Facts videos.

National President Patrick Yoes hosts *The Blue View*, which has featured guests from Capitol Hill

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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.

WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 31 >

and within the FOP, as well as law enforcement experts and leaders from around the country, to gain better insight into the issues and current events in the law enforcement community. The most recent episode features National FOP Auxiliary President Glenda Lehmann and FOP Memorial Committee Chairman Matt Hagen to talk about the 2024 National Peace Officers' Memorial Service.

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

Election 2024 Will Be Here Before You Know It!

The next election is less than five months away! The National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC) needs 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. So far this year, while the PAC received a boost of donations from Day on the Hill, we remain vastly under-resourced and unable to support candidates in any significant way.

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

We 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 hundreds or thousands of dollars (though these are also very much

appreciated) — but every dollar helps! If every FOP member gave just \$1, we could raise \$373,000! If 10% of our members gave just \$5 this year, we would raise \$183,500. We can and need to do better raising funds for our PAC!

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 Ave. NE, Washington, D.C., 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for our recurring monthly credit card donations, please contact the 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**

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FOP Legal Defense Plan for Retired Officers

Retired officers are eligible for unlimited legal defense coverage for civil and criminal claims associated with the legal carrying and use of a concealed weapon.

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Updates on Navigating Consent Decrees



Though they are not a novel concept, consent decrees have gained increased attention in recent years as a tool for reform across numerous jurisdictions in the U.S. For police officers, understanding the implications and intricacies of these decrees is paramount, as they often mandate sweeping changes within law enforcement agencies. These decrees, resulting from investigations into patterns of unconstitutional practices, serve as legal settlement agreements between the agencies and the federal government. The aim is to address systemic issues and ensure adherence to constitutional standards. As such, they represent a reality that many police departments nationwide must appreciate — and know where the FOP plays a critical role in their development and implementation. This article serves as an update on the discussions regarding the challenges and nuances of consent decrees in the police context.

Police misconduct continues to be national news. However, efforts to reform individual police departments across the country have existed for decades. For example, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and public interest groups over the past two decades have attempted to reform unconstitutional practices of numerous police departments across the country through the power of federal courts and consent decrees. The DOJ initiates the process by investigating police departments when there are allegations or evidence of systemic violations of constitutional rights or discriminatory practices. If the DOJ finds evidence of misconduct in its investigation, the DOJ will issue a report and opt to pursue

Just the Facts:

>> Consent decrees serve as legal settlement agreements between law enforcement agencies and the federal government that aim to address systemic issues and ensure adherence to constitutional standards. Unlike other agreements, they are subject to judicial approval and monitoring, adding a layer of accountability to the process. Numerous challenges can arise in achieving full compliance with consent decrees, as seen in Seattle, Chicago and Phoenix. Therefore, it's important that the FOP is involved at every stage of the process with the DOJ to provide an essential viewpoint from officers' perspectives and guide the direction of the investigation or negotiations.

legal action against the agency or seek resolution through a settlement agreement. If the parties enter into an agreement — the consent decree — then they negotiate the terms. These negotiations focus on instituting changes within the department to address the concerns highlighted in the DOJ's report. Subsequently, the department moves forward with the implementation of the finalized terms.

A consent decree is a settlement agreement. Unlike other agreements, which are solely negotiated between the parties, consent decrees are subject to judicial approval and monitoring. The judicial oversight adds a layer of accountability to the process. Likewise, an independent monitor is chosen to oversee and assess the department's adherence to the decree's provisions and evaluate when the department becomes fully compliant with the terms.

Still, achieving full compliance with consent decrees has proven to be both financially burdensome and time-consuming. For example, Seattle's police department entered

in a consent decree in 2012, aimed at reforming its practice “with the goal of ensuring that police services are delivered to the people of Seattle in a manner that fully complies with the Constitution and laws of the United States.” However, it was not until March 2023, **over 11 years and \$200 million later**, that the DOJ moved to end the consent decree. District Court Judge James L. Robart ruled to terminate **the majority** of the decree. However, Robart also ruled that two outstanding issues — officer accountability and police crowd control tactics — still need federal oversight, leaving the consent decree to still be in place at a partial capacity.

In addition, the evolving nature of the Chicago consent decree reflects the uncertainty surrounding its ultimate scope and effectiveness among developing public concerns and systemic challenges. Initially established in response to a 2017 investigation into unconstitutional policing practices within the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the consent decree has continually

expanded its scope to address various aspects of police conduct. First, after the monitoring team found CPD officers committed misconduct during the George Floyd protests in 2020, the consent decree added 17 requirements, ranging from new rules governing efforts to prepare for large protests and civil unrest to requirements that officers' body-worn cameras be reviewed after incidents. Then, in March 2022, the consent decree again expanded to include CPD's use of search warrants. The latest expansion focuses on traffic stops after the death of Dexter Reed during a West Side traffic stop. This expansion would come after the CPD previously launched a review of the department's use of traffic stops and stepped-up efforts to train officers on their responsibility under the Fourth Amendment. The various changes to Chicago's consent decree highlights the undefined boundary and scope of such decrees.

These challenges associated with consent decrees have caused resistance. A recent example includes the Phoenix Police Department. They have been under an investigation since 2021, concerning allegations of excessive force, discriminatory policing, retaliation against protesters and violations surrounding how it treats those with behavioral health issues. Reports state that the DOJ is

likely to finish its investigation soon. But Phoenix is pre-emptively pushing back against the DOJ's findings. Phoenix officials have repeatedly requested, to no avail, to review the DOJ investigation before it is released publicly. The Fraternal Order of Police Phoenix Lodge #2 issued a statement urging the Phoenix City Council "to challenge the findings of the upcoming DOJ report and to strongly reject ongoing federal oversight of Phoenix Police." The statement highlighted that the DOJ had spent more than \$2 million in taxpayer funds in this investigation. In January 2024, an attorney for the City of Phoenix sent DOJ officials a letter asking officials to resolve the Phoenix probe with a nonbinding "technical assistance letter" rather than a consent decree. Technical assistance letters give departments guidelines for reforms but are not enforced by outside monitors. The Phoenix Police Department maintains that it is a "self-correcting agency" that has made plenty of reforms in recent years to change the police department on its own.

Given the various challenges and burdens associated with consent decrees, it is crucial that the FOP is involved at every stage of the process. When a department becomes aware of a potential DOJ investigation or when an investigation is initiated,

the FOP can proactively engage with the DOJ to shape the narrative from the perspective of our officers. Whether it be union leaders or rank-and-file members, we possess the ability to offer a crucial viewpoint from the ground and guide the direction of the investigation or negotiations. Specifically, officers have the opportunity to identify the challenges they encounter and express the changes they deem necessary to better do their jobs. The FOP can also demonstrate that the department acknowledges current issues and has a plan to address them — without the need of a consent decree. Because consent decrees are a reality that many departments across the country must deal with, it is imperative that the FOP continues to be part of the negotiations. **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

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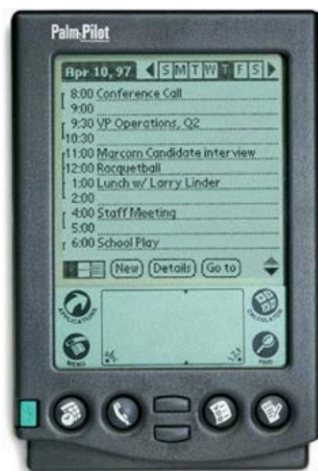


Why Does He Drone On?

I've always been a sort of techie and futuristic guy, one who has continually looked for the next big thing that would improve our profession. I was one of the first to have an electronic spell-check in my squad. Yes, there was such a thing way before auto spell-check was embedded in software. I insisted on installing Cat5 wiring in an entire police station that, at the time, only had two computers and one printer. Yes, there was hard wire before we all went wireless! When I predicted that every desk in every division would have a computer on it, I almost lost my job! Oh boy, was there push back when I insisted on fiber optics in our communications center!

My electronic spell-check went the way of a Palm Pilot, where I started collecting contact information from colleagues. I have been uploading those original contacts and adding others for over 45 years now, first to a BlackBerry and then ultimately to several versions of the latest iPhone — all synced up with my laptop, desktop and Apple Watch! I have some 2,500 contacts, of which some are probably no longer relevant.

When mobile data terminals started arriving on the scene, I tried to install a smaller version on a motor unit and into our bike patrols! I was way ahead of my time with this one. When body cameras first entered the scene, everyone was skeptical.



Yet I was trying to locate the cops from the Seattle area who started the initiative. I predicted that someday cameras would be worn throughout our profession. If only I had an investment strategy back then!

So why the history lesson? Well, as I see it, the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAVs or drones) will be the next big thing. Currently, we are using them for search and rescue because of their capability to go quickly into areas difficult to traverse. We use them for crowd maintenance, as they can get a good video feed from above with little interference. They are cheaper and

quieter than a helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft. Our tactical and special weapons units utilize them for surveillance. Most recently, we are seeing them being utilized for crash reconstruction.

So are they a novelty with limited uses or the next big thing? With the current dilemma we are facing regarding recruitment and retention, they are now being used as first responders. Perhaps out of necessity, or perhaps as a way to cut costs and liabilities. Only time will tell. However, NYPD has implemented a test program. In California, Chula Vista and Fremont



use drones as first responders (DFRs). Montgomery County, Maryland, and Brookhaven, Georgia, are doing the same. A recent article by the National League of Cities has touted their usefulness. We are seeing more and more articles in trade publications explaining their benefits. All the major police technology vendors have a DFR product to sell you.

Oh yes, DFRs are the next big thing. Couple this technology with artificial intelligence, and the possibilities are limitless. Now, I always get a little over my skis when I predict the future, so bear with me.

When will they start taking reports? Well, they probably are doing just that right now. Not in the traditional sense, but they are capturing video and recording it. Isn't that a report? What's the next step? Well, why can't they talk or ask questions? In an electronic Joe Friday voice: "Just the facts, ma'am." How about, "Clear the air space, it's in pursuit!"?

Currently, there is a human behind every drone, so manpower costs are still present. In addition, training is required. The FAA requires licensing — I know because CRI-TAC gets requests for assistance in this area! (You knew I'd work that in somewhere!)



Under 55 pounds/over 55 pounds ... flying at night, over people and places. There are all kinds of requirements and stipulations, but that's for now. What happens when artificial intelligence makes them fully autonomous and self-directed? Imagine the roll call of the future. OK, everyone, we have the net up tonight (50 autonomous drones), they'll let you know where you are needed, if in fact you are needed. Let's be careful out there. Wait — are you out there?

The possibilities are intriguing. A flying robot (a drone) that can be programmed to capture facts without difference to race, color, national origin, sex, religion or age. How do you argue with a machine? No implicit bias! Automated ticket writing takes on a whole new meaning! Imagine "big brother" hovering overhead 24/7. Sounds a little crazy? Over the top? So did computers on every desk in 1989.

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.

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Chateau Recovery Midway, UT

chateaufirstrecovery.com/programs/first-responders

FHE Health: Shatterproof Program Deerfield Beach, FL

fherehab.com/services/first-responders

First Responder Wellness by Simple Recovery Costa Mesa, CA

firstresponder-wellness.com

Harbor of Grace First Responder Program

Havre de Grace, MD

harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders

Transformations Treatment Center: Help for Our Heroes Program

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helpforourheroes.com

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CALIBER: 9MM
CAPACITY: 12+1 | 15+1
SIGHTS: FIXED
BARREL LENGTH: 3.7"



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MOS**

CALIBER: 40 S&W
CAPACITY: 13+1
BARREL LENGTH: 4.02"
SIGHTS: FIXED



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CAPACITY: 30+1
STOCK: ADJUSTABLE
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RIFLE**

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CAPACITY: 10+1
BARREL LENGTH: 24"
STOCK: FOLDING ADJUSTABLE



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**500
RETROGRADE**

CALIBER: 12GA
CAPACITY: 5+1
SIGHTS: BEAD
BARREL LENGTH: 18.5"
STOCK: WALNUT



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ELITE**

CALIBER: 9MM
CAPACITY: 17+1
SIGHTS: NIGHT SIGHTS
BARREL LENGTH: 4.48"



11-0300-000000

\$3399.99

**STACCATO
XL**

CALIBER: 9MM
CAPACITY: 17+1 | 20+1
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