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FOP JOURNAL

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OCTOBER 2026

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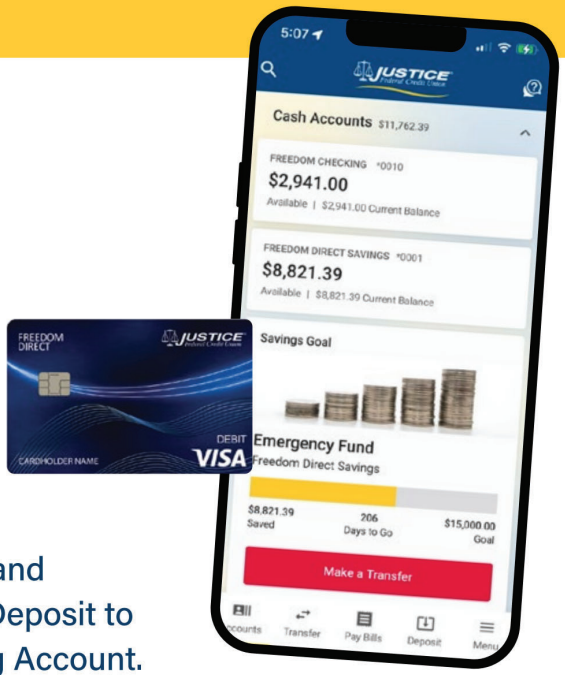
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MADE IN USA

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

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Technology, Trust and the Future of Policing



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

Technology has always changed the way law enforcement does its job.

From the development of two-way radios and the creation of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to DNA analysis, body-worn cameras, license plate readers (LPRs), drones and now artificial intelligence, technology has given officers tools that previous generations could hardly have imagined.

We should embrace those advancements.

Technology can help us solve crimes faster, locate dangerous offenders, find missing children, identify vehicles connected to serious crimes and provide officers with critical information before they ever step out of their patrol cars. Used properly, these tools make officers safer and communities more secure.

But there is an equally important part of this conversation: technology must be used legally, ethically and responsibly. That responsibility belongs to everyone involved, including the companies developing the technology, agencies deploying it and officers using it.

Recently, I publicly responded to comments made by Flock Safety CEO Garrett Langley regarding police behavior and his company's technology (**fop.net/2026/08/who-the-flock-do-you-think-you-are**). My concern was not with license plate reader technology. In fact, I made it clear that LPR technology is an important investigative and officer-safety tool that should be maintained. My concern was with the suggestion that the technology company should position itself as a watchdog over the law enforcement profession rather than as a trusted partner providing tools that help officers protect the public.

Trust matters.

Law enforcement agencies must trust the companies providing technology. Officers must trust that the tools they are being asked to use are secure, reliable and designed to support their mission. Just as importantly, the public must trust that law enforcement agencies have safeguards in place to ensure these powerful technologies are used appropriately.

That is where strong policies and procedures become paramount.

The potential for misuse is not a reason to abandon valuable technology. If that were the standard, many of the tools we depend upon every day would never have survived their introduction.

NCIC is a perfect example. For decades, law enforcement officers have had access to enormous amounts of sensitive information through a centralized system. The answer to concerns about improper access was not to eliminate NCIC. Agencies established policies governing its use, limited access, maintained audit trails, investigated violations and held those who abused the system accountable.

The same principle must guide us as technology evolves.

Before an agency deploys LPRs, artificial intelligence, facial recognition, drones or other emerging technologies, it should have clear written policies defining their authorized use. Those policies should establish who has access, what constitutes a legitimate law enforcement purpose, how information is retained and shared, what auditing is required and what happens when someone violates the rules.

Training must accompany those policies. Supervisors must enforce them. Agencies must regularly review them as technology and the law evolve. And there must be meaningful accountability when the rules are intentionally violated. We cannot simply purchase technology and then figure out the rules afterward.

At the same time, we should resist the argument that because a technology can be misused, law enforcement should not have access to it. That approach would unnecessarily surrender tools that can save lives and solve crimes.

The better approach is responsible innovation.

The Fraternal Order of Police should continue to support technology that helps our members do their jobs more safely and effectively. We should also insist that technology providers respect the officers who use their products, safeguard law enforcement information and understand that trust is earned through their actions and corporate culture.

And we should expect agencies to do their part by putting sound policies in place before problems occur.

Technology will continue to evolve. Artificial intelligence and other advancements will undoubtedly create capabilities we cannot fully envision today. With those advancements will come new legal, ethical, privacy and operational questions.

We should not fear that future, nor should we enter it blindly.

Our responsibility is to embrace technology while protecting the principles that have always guided professional policing: the rule of law, accountability, public trust and our obligation to protect the people we serve.

Technology is a tool. Policy determines how that tool is used. Accountability protects its integrity.

If we get all three right, we can embrace innovation, strengthen public confidence, protect our officers and make our communities safer.

That is how we build trust, and that trust must remain at the center of everything we do. FOP

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Know What and Who You're Voting For



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

Greeting brothers and sisters. I hope this October edition of the *FOP Journal* finds you healthy and well. Even though fall started on September 22, it's still extremely hot in most areas of the country. We are halfway through the 2026 hurricane season, and a strong El Niño has suppressed activity in the Atlantic Ocean so far, but we should not let our guard down. Be prepared for the worst since we still have until November 30, and I know firsthand, the Atlantic is extremely warm right now. Make sure you have an emergency package ready for you and your family. Emergency experts suggest five to seven days of nonperishable food and at least one gallon of water each day for every member of your family. Knowing that you will be called into duty to help others, make sure your family is supplied while you are not there.

This month's cover features the statement: "Vote: Election Day Is Coming Soon." I know, election day is November 3, so why would we talk about voting in October? Simply put, most states will begin early voting in October. Now is the time to look at the voting records and support the various candidates who have given, or not given, to the Fraternal Order of Police, and law enforcement in particular. My message is not partisan. The FOP looks at and supports those who back our agenda regardless of party affiliation. A prime example of this is when we were able to gain repeal of the Windfall Elimination Act. President Patrick Yoes and Legislative Executive Director Jim Pasco masterfully worked both sides of the lower and upper houses to gain bipartisan support. This support was the result of the various state lodges that endorsed representatives from both parties.

Right now, I know the frustration everyone is feeling — higher prices on gas, food and goods. At the core are the wars and conflicts in Ukraine, Russia, Iran and the Middle East. Overall, law enforcement wages have increased over the past several years due to the excellent work of our National Labor Services, the many state lodge labor councils and the various local lodge bargaining teams. However, there are 13 states that have property tax referendums on their upcoming ballots. These property tax referendums cap, reduce or increase the homestead exemptions. This sounds great on the onset, but when you take a deeper dive, there will be major negative consequences to law enforcement, public safety and general services. Cities and counties generate most of their operating budgets from *ad valorem* tax (property tax), which in turn, pays for salaries, equipment and benefits for municipal and county employees, especially law enforcement. If the monies are reduced, salaries, insurance and pensions will be cut. In some cases, major reductions in the workforce may occur. Everyone likes a tax break, but this is not the road we should follow. I support local, county and state governments looking for ways to increase productivity and reduce costs. There is "fat" in all their budgets for "pet" projects, and these areas should be addressed. Reducing funding for public safety should never be an option.

Don't vote based on party lines, rather vote for the candidates who best support the FOP and our efforts.

There are 435 U.S. House of Representatives: currently 218 Republicans, 214 Democrats, one Independent and two vacancies. There are 100 U.S. Senators: currently 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats and two Independents. Over the past 80 years, the party of the sitting president has lost House seats 90% of the time at the midterm elections. Political experts predict the same will hold true this midterm election cycle. There are 22 seats in the House that are tossups and could go either way. They are the following Congressional districts: Arizona-6; California-22; Colorado-8; Florida-14, 22 and 25; Iowa-1 and 3; Michigan-7 and 10; North Carolina-11, New York-17; Ohio-7 and 9; Pennsylvania-7, 8 and10; Texas-15 and 34; Virginia-2; Washington-3 and Wisconsin-3.

It is predicted the Senate is a tossup as well. The seven key states to watch are: Arkansas, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ohio and Texas.

Every FOP member should do their civic duty and vote. Contact your local and state lodge to find out who they have endorsed and support your lodge's choices. Don't vote based on party lines, rather vote for the candidates who best support the FOP and our efforts.

We are now complete with our transfer to the new membership database system, Ortu3. You can no longer access the Association Anywhere platform. The transition went smoothly and I appreciate the hard work our IT and Membership departments did to accomplish this major task. I am also grateful to our state and local lodges for their help. We are preparing for our next advances in the system which will make tracking membership updates easier.

The National FOP had its second biannual cruise to Alaska last month. I am honored to have been selected to be the host for the cruise. My responsibilities included welcoming our 140 members and their spouses to a special reception, passing out a commemorative FOP cruise coin to each traveler and help with any requests the cruisers may have made. A special thanks goes to my wife, Pam, for helping with dinner seating and arranging for a group photo. A great time was had by all, and it allowed me to spend some one-on-one time with many of the members.

You will be receiving room reservation information for our 2027 Biennial National Conference in Salt Lake City this month. Utah State Lodge Secretary, Chris Marquez, and his Conference team are doing a tremendous job in planning a great conference. He has several outstanding opportunities for us, including a special visit to the Salt Lake Temple, which has undergone a massive, multiyear seismic foundation restoration.

In closing, it is an honor to serve you as your National secretary. If my staff or I can assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us. Be safe and I look forward to speaking to you soon. **FOP**



2026 NFOP Alaska Cruise, members and spouses



FLORIDA

In Memory of David "Dave" L. Ericks, Past President, Florida State Fraternal Order of Police

DAVID STEVENS / NATIONAL FOP HISTORY COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Florida State Fraternal Order of Police mourns the passing of David "Dave" L. Ericks, a former state president, law enforcement officer, respected advocate and lifelong member of the FOP family.

Dave's life was defined by service. He began his career wearing the badge, serving as a police officer in Plantation, Florida, and later with the Broward Sheriff's Office. His commitment to his fellow officers led him to the FOP, where he became a strong and determined voice for Florida's law enforcement community.

From 1980–83, Dave served as president of the Florida State Fraternal Order of Police, representing Plantation Lodge #42. His leadership came during an important period in the growth of the Florida State Lodge, and his commitment to protecting the rights, benefits, working conditions and dignity of law enforcement officers continued long after his term as state president ended.

Dave eventually carried that experience to Tallahassee, where he became one of Florida's respected and recognizable governmental consultants. As the founder of Ericks Consultants, Inc., he spent decades working in the legislative process. But regardless of the clients he represented or the issues before the Legislature, Dave never forgot where he came from.

He was a cop. He was an FOP state president. And he remained part of the FOP family.

Dave understood that the benefits and protections law enforcement officers have today did not simply happen. They were fought for, negotiated, defended and preserved by generations of officers and FOP leaders willing to stand up and make their voices heard. He was one of those leaders.

For those of us who work in the halls of the Florida Capitol, Dave was also part of the fabric of Tallahassee. His knowledge of the legislative process, his relationships across political and professional lines, and his unmistakable personality made him a fixture in Florida government for decades. Through Clydes and Costellos, he also created a gathering place that became legendary among legislators, staff, lobbyists, law enforcement leaders and countless others who passed through Tallahassee.

Dave leaves behind more than a successful career. He leaves a legacy. It is a legacy of service to law enforcement, leadership within the FOP, advocacy in the Florida Capitol, friendship and an unwavering connection to the men and women who wear the badge.

The Florida State FOP extends its deepest condolences to Dave's family, friends, colleagues and everyone whose life he touched.

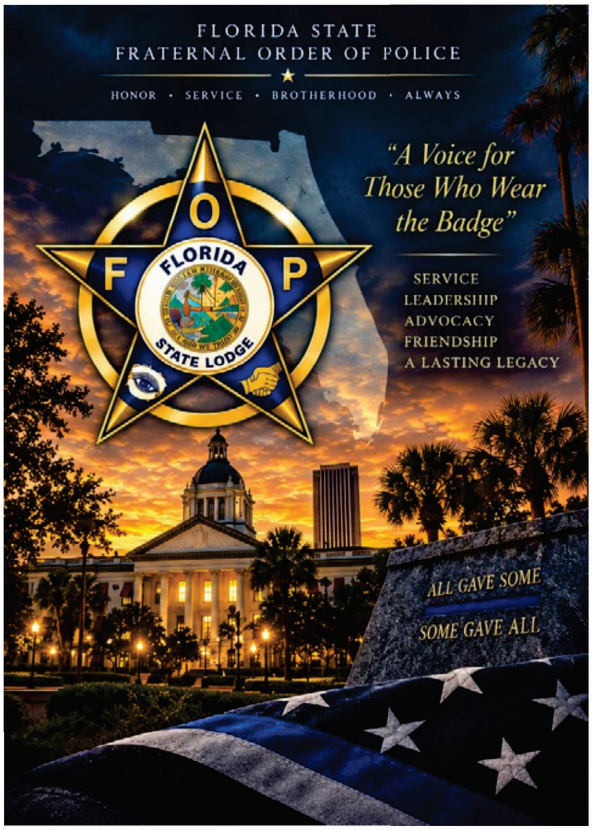
We are especially proud that his family has chosen to honor his memory by directing memorial contributions to the Florida State Fraternal Order of Police Memorial Foundation, helping ensure that Dave's commitment to Florida law enforcement will continue to make a difference for generations to come.

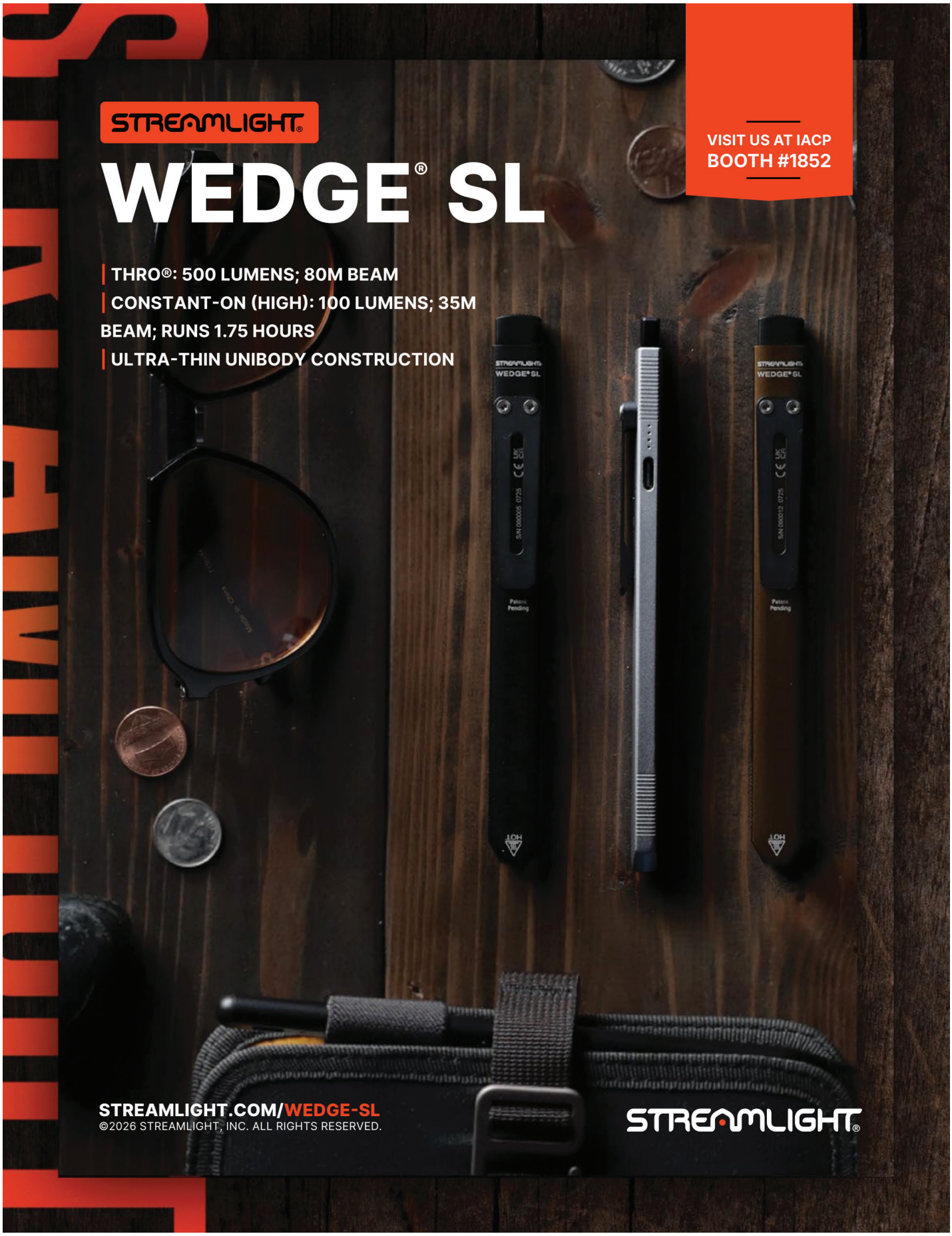
Rest easy, Brother Dave.

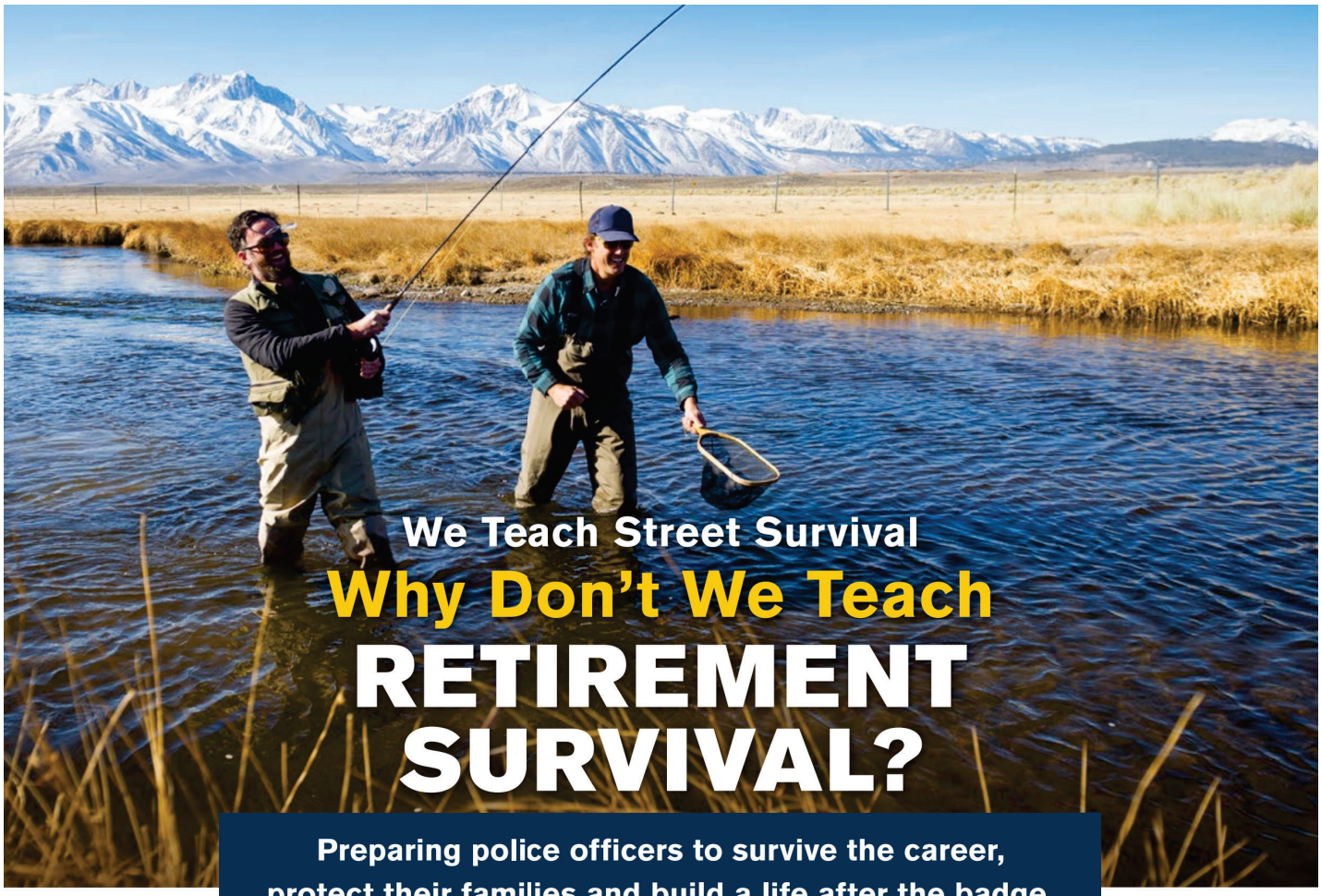
Your service is complete, but your legacy lives on. **FOP**



Past Florida State FOP President Dave Ericks (left) congratulates Steve Zona on being sworn in as Florida State Lodge President in 2023.




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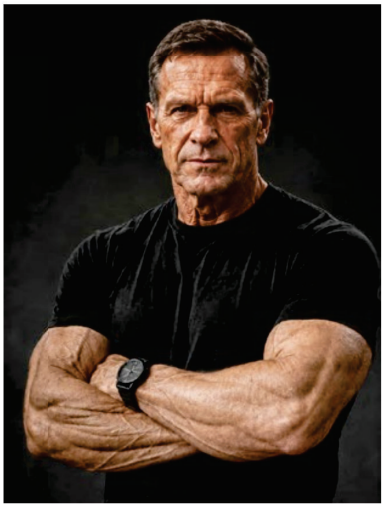
Why Don't We Teach RETIREMENT SURVIVAL?

Preparing police officers to survive the career, protect their families and build a life after the badge.

BY LARRY P. DANAHER

Thirty years ago, I worked beside officers who were young, strong, driven and convinced we could handle whatever came over the radio. We handled death scenes, violence, family crises, terrible crashes, abuse, addiction, grief and the thousand ordinary calls that fill the space between the extraordinary ones. We finished the report, cleared the call and went on to the next one.

Recently, I learned that an officer I worked with approximately three decades ago died by suicide. That loss forced me to look backward in a way I had not done before. I thought about the officers I have known over the years. I thought about the divorces — far more than I ever imagined when we were young. I thought about heart attacks, cancer, other serious health problems, broken relationships, loneliness and the difficult transitions some officers experienced after retirement.



Larry P. Danaher is a retired police captain and former SWAT commander with 22 years of law enforcement service.

I am not suggesting that law enforcement caused every divorce, every illness or every tragedy. Life is more complicated than that. But after a lifetime around this profession, I believe we have an obligation to ask a question we do not ask often enough: What does a police career take from us while we are busy believing we are handling it?

That question matters especially for the officer who has been on the street five, 10 or 15 years. Those officers may read this and think, "That will never be me." I understand. At that point in my career, I probably would have thought the same thing.

At five years, you are building confidence. At 10, you have experience. At 15, very little surprises you anymore. You learn to walk into situations other people run away from. You learn to control fear and emotion because someone has to remain calm. You learn to see things that most people will never see and then drive to the next call as if nothing happened.

That ability is part of professional survival. But survival on the street is not the same thing as surviving the career.



Police officers become very good at compartmentalizing. We can leave a tragic scene, answer a barking-dog complaint, go home, eat dinner, cut the grass, go to the gym and return to work the next day. Because we continue functioning, we may tell ourselves nothing affected us. Sometimes that is true. Sometimes it is not. Sometimes we have simply blurred the vision enough to keep moving.

The problem is that a career is long. The calls accumulate. The missed holidays accumulate. The nights away from family accumulate. The arguments you did not discuss because you were tired accumulate. The friends outside law enforcement you stopped calling may eventually stop calling you. The body that tolerated shift work and stress at 28 may not respond the same way at 48 or 58.

And eventually, there is a last shift.

One day, the uniform comes off for the final time. The badge goes into a case or a drawer. The radio goes silent. There is no briefing tomorrow. No one is waiting for you to answer the next call.

For 20, 25 or 30 years, being a police officer may have become more than a job. It can become an identity. People know you by your rank. Your friendships may revolve around police work. Your schedule revolves around the department. Your stories, humor, habits and sense of purpose can all become connected to the profession.

Then retirement arrives, and for the first time in decades, nobody needs you to be the police.

That is the part of the career for which we often do a poor job preparing people.

We teach officers how to enter the profession. We teach firearms, law, tactics, defensive skills, driving, report writing, investigations, decision-making and officer survival. We teach them how to go through the door. We teach them how to win a confrontation. We teach them how to make it home at the end of the shift.

But do we teach them how to make it home at the end of the career?

Retirement preparation is often financial. We talk about pensions, deferred compensation, insurance and benefits. Those things matter. But an officer can be financially prepared for retirement and still be completely unprepared emotionally, socially and physically for the life that follows.

There are questions that should be asked years before the retirement paperwork is signed. Who are you without the badge? Who are your friends outside law enforcement? What relationship do you have with your spouse and children? What will make you get out of bed tomorrow morning? What will give you purpose? What will challenge you? What will keep you physically healthy? Who will you call when a memory from 20 years ago suddenly becomes clear again?

And perhaps the most important question of all: Have you built a life that the career can return you to?

That question should not begin at year 29. It should begin at year five.

Protect your marriage while you are still married. Protect your friendships while people are still calling. Protect your health before a physician gives you a reason to become concerned. Develop interests that have nothing to do with a badge. Stay involved with your children and grandchildren. Know people who have never worn a uniform. Learn how to talk about difficult things before silence becomes your normal response.

Police work can change the way you see the world. Experienced officers notice exits in restaurants. We watch hands. We hear changes in tone. We see possibilities because experience has taught us how quickly ordinary situations can become extraordinary. That awareness can keep us alive. But the profession should not be allowed to consume every part of the person wearing the badge.

There is nothing wrong with loving police work. There is nothing wrong with being proud of the badge. I am proud of my career. But the badge should be part of your life, not all of your life.

Departments can help. I believe agencies should consider something beyond the traditional retirement seminar: a life-after-the-badge program that begins long before retirement.

Bring retired officers back to speak honestly — not only about pensions and benefits, but about marriage, loneliness, physical health, identity, drinking, sleep, friendships, purpose, depression, family relationships and the unexpected emotions that can come when the profession suddenly becomes the past. Include spouses and families. Let officers hear from people who have already sat in that chair after retirement and wondered what happened.

Supervisors also have a role long before retirement. Leadership is not simply making sure a shift is staffed and reports are completed. Leaders should know their people well enough to notice changes. The talkative officer becomes quiet. The dependable officer begins withdrawing. The calm officer becomes angry. Someone who once loved the job suddenly seems disconnected.

A supervisor does not have to diagnose anything. Sometimes leadership begins with four sincere words, “How are you doing?” Then the leader has to be willing to hear the real answer.

Officers also have to take responsibility for themselves. A department can provide peer support, chaplains, employee assistance, counseling and wellness resources, but an officer still has to recognize that using those resources is not weakness. Strength is not pretending nothing affects you. Strength is knowing when something is becoming too heavy to carry alone.

The family standing outside a tragic scene may be given the

Continued on page 14 ›

Continued from page 13 ›

choice not to look. The officer inside does not have that choice. Officers see what happened, make decisions, protect everyone else from seeing more than they need to see, finish the paperwork and move on. Over a career, some of those pictures fade. Some remain.

What concerns me now is not only what officers see during the career, it is what happens when the career finally becomes quiet enough for them to see everything they have been carrying. That is why we cannot wait until retirement to have this conversation.

Talk to the five-year officer. Talk to the 10-year officer. Talk to the 15-year officer. Tell them to build a life outside the job while they are still building their career. Tell them to take care of their bodies. Tell them to protect their families. Tell them to keep friends who do not wear badges. Tell them to find purpose that does not depend upon a rank, assignment or uniform.

Do not tell them the career will destroy them. That is not the message. Tell them the career is powerful enough that they need to respect what it can do to them.

I wish I could go back 30 years and have this conversation with every officer I knew — I cannot.

But we can have it with the officers who are working today.

Maybe one officer reads this and goes home and talks to a spouse instead of shutting down. Maybe another schedules the medical appointment that has been postponed. Maybe someone calls an old friend. Maybe a supervisor checks on an officer who has not seemed like himself lately. Maybe a retired officer realizes that needing help after the badge is gone does not erase a career of strength and service.

And maybe one officer who is sitting alone and wondering whether life still has purpose understands that the end of a police career is not the end of a life.

We spend tremendous resources teaching officers how to survive the street. We also need to teach them how to survive the career.

And then we need to teach them how to live after it.

Do not wait until retirement to sit in a chair and ask, "What happened?" Ask the question now, while there is still time to change the answer.

About the Author

Larry P. Danaher is a retired police captain and former SWAT commander with 22 years of law-enforcement service. His career included patrol, investigations, emergency management and instruction in firearms, self-defense, interviewing techniques and forensic hypnosis. A published law enforcement author and speaker with more than 500 professional presentations, he writes about leadership, officer decision-making, career resilience and life after the badge. **FOP**

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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 often 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.

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STAYING AHEAD OF THE SCARE

A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO HEALTH

SHERRI MARTIN / DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS

Law enforcement officers are trained to look for warning signs. We notice the car that does not belong, the behavior that seems out of place or the situation that does not quite feel right. We assess risk, anticipate what could happen next and take action before a problem becomes a crisis.

That same proactive mindset can be applied to your health.

Unfortunately, it is easy to spend a career looking out for everyone else while putting your own health on the back burner. Long shifts, rotating schedules, stressful calls, missed meals and disrupted sleep can become part of the job. Over time, those demands can take a toll on both physical and mental health.

And just like a threat that goes unnoticed, health problems can quietly creep up on you.

Don't Wait for a Warning

October is a good time to think about prevention. Halloween reminds us that some of the things we fear most are the things we cannot see coming. When it comes to your health, however, you do not have to wait for a scare.

Many common health problems can develop without obvious symptoms. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, vision changes and hearing problems may not announce themselves until they have become more serious. Regular medical care gives you an opportunity to identify potential problems early and do something about them.

Think of preventive health care as routine maintenance. You would not wait until your patrol vehicle breaks down in the middle of a shift before checking the oil, tires or brakes. Your body deserves the same attention.

A primary care or wellness visit is a good place to start. Depending on your age, medical history and individual risk factors, your provider can recommend appropriate screenings, vaccinations, blood pressure and cholesterol checks, cancer screenings and other preventive services. If your agency doesn't mandate an annual physical, implement your own mandate for your annual checkup.

Don't Let the Little Things Become Big Things

Some of the easiest health appointments to put off are also some of the easiest to schedule. When was your last dental cleaning? Have you had your eyes examined recently? Are you keeping up with recommended wellness visits and screenings and well man/well woman visits?



Law enforcement officers understand the value of preparation. Your health deserves the same approach.

Dental health is about more than having a clean smile. Regular dental examinations can identify cavities, gum disease and other problems before they become painful or require more extensive treatment.

Your eyes deserve attention, too. Vision can change gradually, and you may not notice a difference until it starts affecting your work or daily life. Regular eye examinations can help identify vision problems and, in some cases, signs of other health conditions.

Men and women should also make time for recommended wellness visits and age-appropriate screenings. The right schedule will vary from person to person, so talk with your health care provider about what makes sense for you.

These appointments may not feel urgent. That is exactly the point. Prevention is about taking care of something before it becomes urgent.

Your Mind Is Part of Your Health

Taking care of your physical health is only half of the equation.

Law enforcement officers regularly encounter situations that most people will never experience. Stress is an expected part of the profession, but that does not mean you have to ignore its effects.

Mental and physical health are closely connected. Chronic stress can affect sleep, energy, concentration, mood and physical well-being. At the same time, physical problems such as chronic pain, poor sleep or fatigue can make it harder to manage stress and maintain emotional resilience.

Pay attention to changes in yourself. Are you sleeping poorly? Are you more irritable than usual? Have you stopped enjoying things you normally enjoy? Are you relying on alcohol, food or other habits to cope with stress? Do you feel constantly on edge or unable to relax? These can be signs that something needs attention.

Asking for help is not a sign that you cannot handle the job. In fact, recognizing a problem and addressing it early is another example of good risk management. A conversation with a mental health professional, peer support resource, physician or someone you trust can be an important first step.

Don't wait until the problem becomes a monster.

Keep the Cobwebs Out

There are also everyday choices that can help protect both physical and mental health.

Movement is one of them. You do not have to train like an athlete every day to benefit from regular physical activity. Walking, strength training, stretching, recreational activities and other forms of exercise can support cardiovascular health, strength, mobility and mood.

Sleep deserves attention as well. For officers who work nights, rotating shifts or long hours, getting consistent quality sleep can be challenging. Even so, making sleep a priority can pay dividends in alertness, decision making, mood and overall health. If persistent sleep problems are affecting your life, talk with a health care provider rather than simply accepting poor sleep as part of the job.

Nutrition matters, too. A busy shift does not always make healthy eating easy, but small improvements can add up. Keeping nutritious food available, staying hydrated and avoiding the habit of running an entire shift on convenience foods and caffeine can make a difference.

None of these steps require perfection. They require consistency.

Make Prevention Part of the Job

Law enforcement officers understand the value of preparation. You check your equipment. You know your surroundings. You think about what could go wrong and prepare accordingly.

Your health deserves the same approach.

Schedule the dental cleaning. Make the eye appointment. Get the wellness visit on the calendar. Ask your doctor which screenings are appropriate for you. Pay attention to your sleep. Move your body. Take stress seriously. And if something does not feel right, do not simply hope it disappears.

This October, don't let your health creep up on you. Recognize that prevention is one of the most effective tools you have. The goal is not simply to stay healthy enough to get through the next shift. It is to build a healthier future so you can continue doing the job you care about, enjoy the people who matter most and be there for the years ahead.

This Halloween, forget the ghosts and goblins for a moment and take a look at the things that may be hiding in plain sight.

Your future self will thank you, and that's the biggest treat of all! FOP

HEART HEALTH BEYOND THE FITNESS TEST

Police officers are often called tactical athletes for a reason. Whether it's responding to an emergency, chasing a suspect or making split-second decisions under pressure, the job places unique demands on the body. A new scientific statement (**tinyurl.com/34dr6w8f**) from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology provides the first comprehensive guidance focused on the cardiovascular health of tactical athletes, including law enforcement officers. More importantly, it reinforces a message many officers may not hear often enough: being fit for the job and being heart healthy aren't always the same thing.

Why Police Work Creates Unique Heart Demands

Unlike a planned workout, police work often involves sudden bursts of intense activity after long periods of sitting, interrupted sleep, heightened alertness and stressful situations. Officers may perform demanding tasks while carrying heavy gear or working in extreme weather. Over time, those demands can place additional strain on the cardiovascular system that isn't always reflected in a fitness assessment.

Cardiovascular disease remains a leading medical cause of duty-related deaths among tactical athletes. For law enforcement officers, the risk can increase during situations involving intense exertion and high stress, such as emergency response activities or suspect pursuits.

Fitness Matters; Knowing Your Numbers Matters, Too

One of the most important takeaways from the new guidance is that physical fitness alone does not eliminate cardiovascular risk.

"Traditional risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, Type 2 diabetes and tobacco use remain common among tactical athletes," said Vice President of the National Fraternal Order of Police Joe Gamaldi. "Many officers spend decades in the profession, making cardiovascular health important throughout their careers, not just during annual fitness testing."

That's why experts encourage officers to know their numbers, keep up with preventive care and pay attention to changes in their health.

Symptoms such as chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, heart palpitations or a noticeable decline in exercise capacity shouldn't be ignored or simply attributed to getting older or having a tough week on the job.



A Practical Playbook for Heart Health

The American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8™ (**tinyurl.com/3xbw292s**) offers a practical framework for supporting heart and brain health:

- Eat healthier foods when possible
- Move more and stay physically active
- Prioritize sleep
- Avoid tobacco and nicotine products
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Monitor blood pressure
- Manage cholesterol
- Manage blood sugar

No one expects perfection, especially in a profession where schedules, stress and unpredictability are part of the job. But small, consistent steps can make a meaningful difference over time.

At the end of the day, protecting your heart helps protect your readiness, your career and your ability to continue serving the communities that depend on you.

Continued on page 20 ›

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Continued from page 18 ›

Shared Commitment to Health

The National Fraternal Order of Police and the American Heart Association share a commitment to supporting the health and well-being of law enforcement officers. Together, both organizations are helping officers stay healthy, resilient and ready to serve. By embracing Life's Essential 8™ (**tinyurl.com/mrxdjfvb**), officers can take practical steps toward a healthier future. **FOP**

Check out the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8™ (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

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FHE Health: Shatterproof Program
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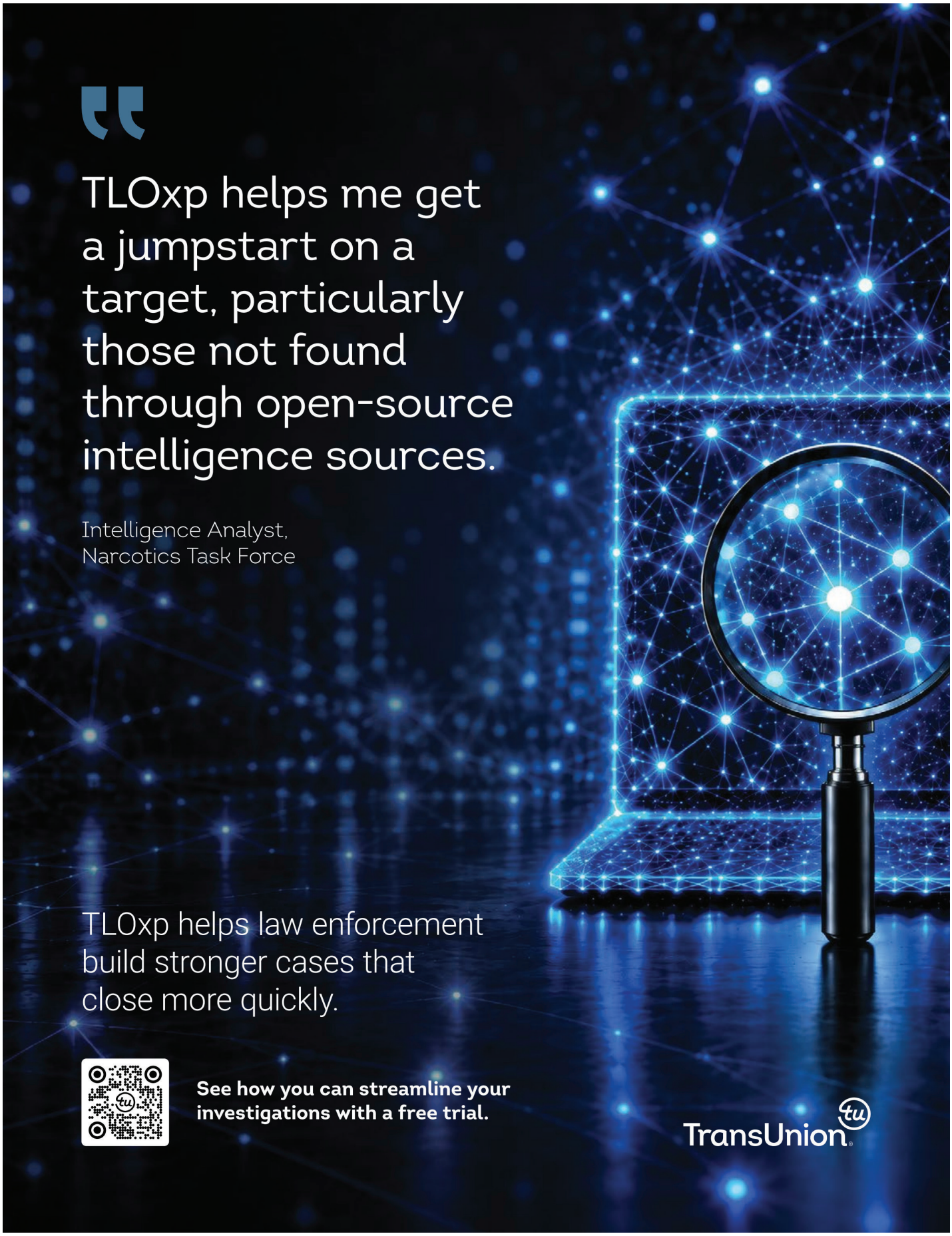
First Responder Wellness by Simple Recovery
Costa Mesa, CA
firstresponder-wellness.com

Harbor of Grace First Responder Program
Havre de Grace, MD
harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders

Throttle and Thrive
Palos Verdes Estates, CA
throttleandthrive.com

Warrior's Heart
Bandera, TX
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National University

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National University's Commitment to Law Enforcement Education: Advancing Careers Through Leadership, Research and Opportunity

Law enforcement professionals dedicate their careers to protecting their communities, adapting to evolving public safety challenges and leading through times of change. As those responsibilities continue to grow, higher education has become an essential tool for officers seeking to strengthen their leadership skills, expand their knowledge and prepare for advancement. At National University, supporting public safety professionals is a core part of that mission. Through career-focused degree programs, tuition-saving scholarship opportunities and partnerships across the law enforcement community, National University is helping officers achieve their educational and professional goals.



Building Leadership Through Criminal Justice Education

For law enforcement professionals looking to advance into supervisory and leadership roles, National University's Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration provides a strong foundation in public safety operations, organizational leadership and criminal justice systems. Designed with working professionals in mind, the program combines academic knowledge with real-world application, helping officers develop the skills needed to lead effectively in today's evolving public safety environment.

The curriculum explores key areas such as law enforcement policy, ethics, administration, organizational behavior and the justice system. Students gain a deeper understanding of how criminal justice agencies operate while strengthening critical thinking, communication and decision-making skills that are essential for career advancement.

For officers seeking promotion opportunities or preparing for future leadership responsibilities, the degree helps build competencies in team management, strategic planning and public service leadership. The program is also designed to recognize the value of prior law enforcement training, allowing eligible students to receive academic credit for qualifying professional experience and academy training.

With flexible online coursework and monthly start dates, the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration enables law enforcement professionals to continue serving their communities while pursuing a degree that supports their long-term career goals. Whether the next step is a specialized assignment, a supervisory position or graduate-level education, the program provides a practical pathway for professional growth.

Making Education More Affordable Through the Public Safety Promise

National University recognizes that cost can be a significant barrier to higher education, especially for public safety professionals balancing demanding careers and family obligations. To help make educational advancement more accessible, the university created the Public Safety Promise Scholarship. This initiative provides substantial tuition reductions for eligible public safety professionals, their spouses and dependents.

Through the program, eligible students can receive a 25% tuition reduction on most associate, bachelor's, master's and certificate programs, as well as a 15% tuition reduction on most doctoral programs and a 10% discount on the Juris Doctor program. The scholarship extends beyond individual officers, allowing family members to pursue educational opportunities while benefiting from the same commitment to affordability.

In addition to scholarship support, National University helps students maximize previous training and professional experience. Through credit-for-prior-learning opportunities, public safety professionals may receive academic credit for qualifying law enforcement training, helping them complete degrees more efficiently and reducing the time required to earn a credential.

Flexible Learning for Today's Public Safety Workforce

For many officers, flexibility is essential when pursuing higher education. Shift work, overtime responsibilities, court appearances and family commitments

can make traditional academic schedules difficult to manage.

National University addresses these challenges through flexible online learning formats, monthly course start dates, year-round enrollment opportunities and accelerated courses that allow students to make steady progress toward their educational goals. Students also have access to more than 150 degree, certificate and credential programs across a broad range of disciplines.

Programs particularly relevant to public safety professionals include Criminal Justice Administration, Criminal Justice Leadership, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Public Administration, Forensic Sciences and Cybersecurity. These offerings support both sworn and civilian personnel who are seeking advancement in leadership, operations, investigations, emergency management or public service administration.

Building Stronger Communities Through Partnerships

National University's support for law enforcement extends beyond academic programs. The university actively partners with organizations that share a commitment to leadership, diversity, professional development and public service.

The partnership with the Fraternal Order of Police reflects a shared commitment to supporting the men and women who serve their communities every day. By combining affordable tuition with flexible online learning, monthly start dates and opportunities to earn credit for prior law enforcement training and experience, National University helps FOP members pursue their educational goals without putting their careers on hold.

Investing in the Future of Law Enforcement

As the public safety profession continues to evolve, education remains one of the most powerful tools available to officers and agency leaders. Through affordable scholarship opportunities, flexible learning options, doctoral-level leadership development, applied research partnerships and strong relationships with organizations across the law enforcement community, National University is helping public safety professionals prepare for the future.

To learn more about degree programs, scholarship opportunities and educational benefits available through the Public Safety Promise, visit **nu.edu/publicsafety**. FOP

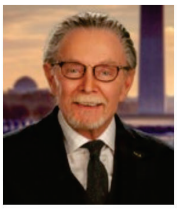
The National Fraternal Order of Police University

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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Ashland University — Ashland, OH
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National University — San Diego, CA
Southeast Missouri State University — Cape Girardeau, MO
Southern New Hampshire University — Manchester, NH
Tiffin University — Tiffin, OH
University of Cincinnati Online — Cincinnati, OH
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House Passes Bills Before Recess

Congress returned — briefly — from its August recess with the House meeting for only two weeks last month and recessing a full two weeks early. The Senate is scheduled to remain in session until October 2, but that remains uncertain because of the House's early exit.

Most members are focused on the upcoming midterm elections and have allowed work on major legislation, like appropriations, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and a potential third reconciliation bill to slip into a lame-duck session.

Just the Facts:

» Although the House recessed early, it considered and passed by voice vote several pieces of legislation pertinent to the National Fraternal Order of Police: the National Law Enforcement Officers Remembrance, Support and Community Outreach Act, Combating Illicit Xylazine Act and Safe Cloud Storage Act. The bills now move over to the Senate for consideration. Additionally, by an overwhelming bipartisan vote, the House passed the Prison Staff Safety Enhancement Act, which was then signed into law by the president. Plus, the president authorized an Alternative Plan for Pay Adjustments calling for a broader approach on which federal law enforcement categories will be eligible for a new pay raise.

Continuing Resolutions and Other Appropriations and Funding Measures

One of the first bills taken up by the House upon their return was H.R. 6500, the "clean" continuing resolution (CR), which was considered and passed under a suspension of the rules on a 370–48 vote. The resolution, which was signed into law, extends funding for the federal government through December 11.

The debate on appropriations bills has largely stalled. The House passed its spending measures for the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security in May and June, respectively, while the Committee on Appropriations has favorably reported all 12 appropriations bills, only three have passed the House. The Senate Appropriations Committee, however, has yet to consider any spending bills and, in most cases, there is no draft legislative text available for review.

Before the recess, the House considered and passed H. Con. Res. 113, which starts the process for a third budget reconciliation bill. The measure includes $73 billion in funding for the Iran war, $12 billion in aid to the nation's farmers and a $10 billion fund aimed at incentivizing states to adopt elements of the SAVE America Act. Senate leadership recently announced that the Senate will not consider the reconciliation bill until after the midterm elections in November.

House Passes FOP-Backed Bills Before Early Exit

In a shortened session the week after Labor Day, the House considered and passed, under a suspension of the rules, the following legislation by voice vote:

- H.R. 309 (**tinyurl.com/2j7sau58**), the National Law Enforcement Officers Remembrance, Support and Community Outreach Act
- H.R. 1266 (**tinyurl.com/57w3vhzb**), the Combating Illicit Xylazine Act
- H.R. 7834 (**tinyurl.com/mr645pbw**), the Safe Cloud Storage Act

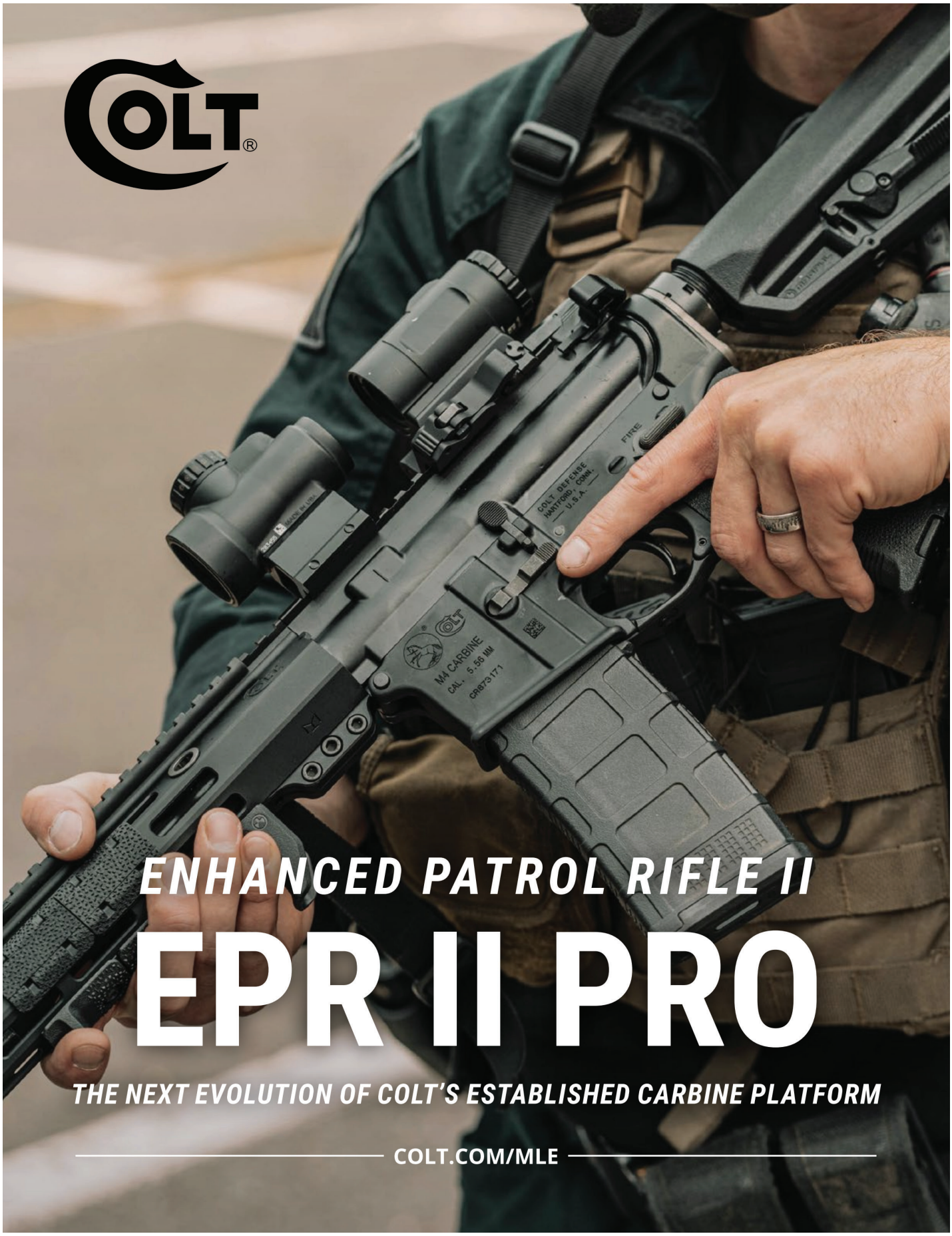
All three of these bills were supported by the FOP and will now be transmitted to the Senate for further action. The staff in the National Legislative Office are engaged with our allies in the Senate to ensure the bills are considered along with H.R. 8481 (**fop.net/letter/19120**), Kayleigh's Act, which passed the House by voice vote under a suspension of the rules in August.

The FOP had also been pushing for the consideration of H.R. 7876 (**tinyurl.com/3r87yb4h**), the Secret Service-Local Law Enforcement Partnership Act, and S. 3897 (**tinyurl.com/mujbc8m9**), the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program Expansion Act. With the House leaving town earlier than expected, neither measure was considered.

The House also considered and passed H.R. 2798, the Guarding Unprotected Aging Retirees from Deception (GUARD) Act, on a 417–7 vote. The bill would allow state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to use federal funding for investigations into elder financial fraud and other financial fraud crimes.

Finally, the House considered and passed S. 307, the Prison Staff Safety Enhancement Act, by a vote of 376–8. The bill was sent to the president who signed it into law.

Continued on page 26 ›



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Top Priorities in Brief



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

House: 75 co-sponsors (19 R, 56 D)
Senate: Not yet introduced

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

House: 66 co-sponsors (10 R, 56 D)
Senate: 2 co-sponsors (2 D)

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

House: Passed
Senate: 12 co-sponsors (12 R)

H.R. 1551/S. 5214, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 118 co-sponsors (95 R, 23 D)
Senate: 3 co-sponsors (1 R, 2 D)

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

House: 153 co-sponsors (52 R, 101 D)
Senate: 27 co-sponsors (9 R, 18 D)

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



WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 24 >

Senate Rejects the Clarity Act

The Senate considered and rejected a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3633, the Digital Asset Market Clarity Act or CLARITY Act, on a 49–50 vote.

The FOP supported the legislation (**tinyurl.com/294zyku4**), which would establish a clear regulatory framework for digital assets and provide law enforcement with tools needed to investigate criminal conduct involving these assets, required 60 votes on this procedural motion before the Senate could begin debate on the measure.

Senate proponents of the landmark legislation filed a manager's amendment a few days prior to the vote, but the changes were not enough for the bill to advance.

President Trump Proposes Pay Raises for Federal Law Enforcement Officers

President Donald J. Trump submitted an Alternative Plan for Pay Adjustments (**tinyurl.com/9wnjr9sy**) to Congress that would provide federal law enforcement officers with a 3.8% pay raise, similar to the raise that went into effect in January of this year.

The Administration's proposed pay raise is meant to help federal agencies address the same recruitment and retention challenges their state and local counterparts are facing.

In the proposal to Congress, President Trump writes:

"Separately, to increase recruitment and retention in critical law enforcement roles, at my direction the Office of Personnel Management shall use its statutory authority to increase 2027 compensation for law enforcement personnel by 3.8 percent. That change is part of a separate process from the establishment of this alternative pay plan under 5 U.S.C. 5303(b) and 5 U.S.C. 5304a."

President Trump instituted a similar raise in January, but it did not apply to all federal law enforcement officers, despite the FOP's efforts to properly identify the officers who deserve this pay bump. Unlike this year when the raises were limited to specified categories of front-line law enforcement personnel, the president has directed the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to take a broader approach (**tinyurl.com/3ptmjwn3**) for 2027, and will consult with federal departments and agencies to determine who will be eligible for the pay increase. The FOP will work with the White House and OPM to ensure that all federal officers get the raise. Unless overridden by Congress, OPM will release the new pay tables by the end of the calendar year.

Other Legislative Activity:

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

- **H.R. 8481**, Kayleigh's Law Act, which would close gaps in federal law by ensuring that victims of violent crime and sexual assault have lifetime protections against their abuser
- **H.R. 10349**, the Emergency Responders Mental Health Training (EMT) Act, which would establish a post-grad fellowship pilot program for behavioral health specialists to properly address first responder mental health
- **S. 5901**, the Training Rural Law Enforcement Officers Act, which would authorize the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to extend grants to certified and accredited law enforcement-related nonprofit organizations in order to train agencies that have fewer than 50 sworn personnel at no cost to them individually nor as a department

Election 2026: Model Congressional Questionnaire on the FOP Website

The National FOP has made its 2026 Congressional Candidate Questionnaire available on the FOP website at **tinyurl.com/fop2026candidatequestionnaire**.

The model questionnaire was prepared by staff at the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center in Washington, D.C., to aid state and local lodges in evaluating federal candidates for the U.S. Congress in the 2026 election cycle.

The questions are drawn from issues supported by the National FOP. It is particularly important

for 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. Lodges are encouraged to include appropriate local and state issues that are important to them and that will help our members determine which candidates support the FOP's agenda.

Sign Up for the FOP's Weekly Update

The FOP's *Weekly Update* from Capitol Hill is distributed every week, providing our members with the latest news from Washington, D.C. If you're not receiving it, go to **tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update** to sign up.

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

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

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

NFOP PAC Update

The NFOP PAC still needs your support!

The NFOP PAC recently passed an important milestone by reaching more than $100,000 in contributions. While this is certainly good news, it still falls well short of the much greater amounts raised by other law enforcement and public safety organizations. We must continue to grow our fund and increase participation among our members.

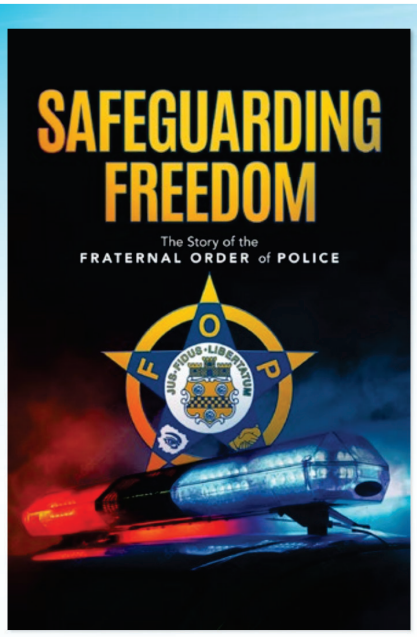
The election is quickly approaching, and with control of Congress at stake, **now is the time to make an impact**. Our legislative priorities, including the Protect and Serve Act, which would establish federal penalties for certain serious crimes targeting law enforcement officers, still need to be advanced. The PAC provides an important tool to support our broader legislative efforts and maintain our presence in Washington.

But we need your help. **Even small contributions can make a difference when thousands of FOP members participate**. If you are not already a contributor, now is the time to join your fellow members and support the NFOP PAC. Together, we can continue building the resources needed to fight for our officers and the issues that matter most to them.

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 $191,100.

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 recurring monthly donations, please contact the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center at (202) 547-8189 or David Taboh at **dtaboh@fop.net**.

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



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.

A Member's Guide to Choosing a Plan Attorney

A critical incident, administrative investigation or civil claim can develop quickly, often forcing you to make important decisions under pressure. That's not the time to start searching for an attorney, comparing qualifications or figuring out who's available after hours.

Having an attorney in mind doesn't mean you expect something to go wrong. It means you've taken a proactive step to protect yourself, your career and your future. Here's how to begin your search, evaluate your options and prepare before the need arises.

Start With Your Local Lodge

Your local lodge leader is a valuable starting point. Lodge leaders often know which attorneys regularly represent law enforcement officers in your area, and they can share insight from other members' experiences, including an attorney's familiarity with local agencies, administrative procedures and the types of matters officers may face.

Consider asking:

- Which attorneys have represented members in our area?
- What types of matters do they handle?
- Are they familiar with our agency and its procedures?
- How can they be reached during a critical incident or after hours?

Your lodge leader can help you identify potential attorneys, but the choice is yours. Speak directly with any attorney you're considering to determine whether they meet your needs.

Know What to Look For

Law enforcement officers may face criminal, administrative or civil proceedings, and attorneys may handle one or several of these areas. Look for experience that matches the types of matters you could encounter.

Ask a prospective attorney:

- Do you regularly represent law enforcement officers?
- What experience do you have with criminal, administrative or civil defense?
- Are you familiar with critical incidents and agency investigations?

Don't wait for an incident to occur. Make an informed choice before you need one.

- What geographic area do you serve?
- Who would handle my matter and communicate with me?
- How do you respond to after-hours calls?

As you consider your options, think about the attorney's experience, availability and approach to communication. An initial conversation can help you decide whether the attorney is a good fit for your needs.

Understand the Benefits of Using a Plan Attorney

Plan attorneys must meet requirements such as being authorized to practice law in the applicable jurisdiction, carrying professional liability insurance, making specified disclosures and agreeing to follow the Plan's attorney guidelines and administrative procedures.

Choosing a Plan attorney also carries a financial benefit: for an eligible claim, legal services from a Plan attorney are covered in full, subject to the Plan's terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions. Different benefit limits and requirements apply if you choose an attorney who is not a Plan attorney. A Plan attorney can reduce uncertainty about how legal fees will be paid, so you can focus on your case.

These requirements and benefits matter, but they don't replace your own evaluation. Attorneys who provide services under the Plan are not employees or agents of the Plan. The attorney-client relationship is between you and the attorney, and the Plan does not recommend or guarantee any attorney's skills or expertise.

You have the right to select an attorney of your choice, subject to the Plan's terms, conditions and coverage limits.

Find a Plan Attorney Online

Our attorney search feature (**foplegal.com/attorney-search**) makes it easier to find Plan attorneys who serve your area.

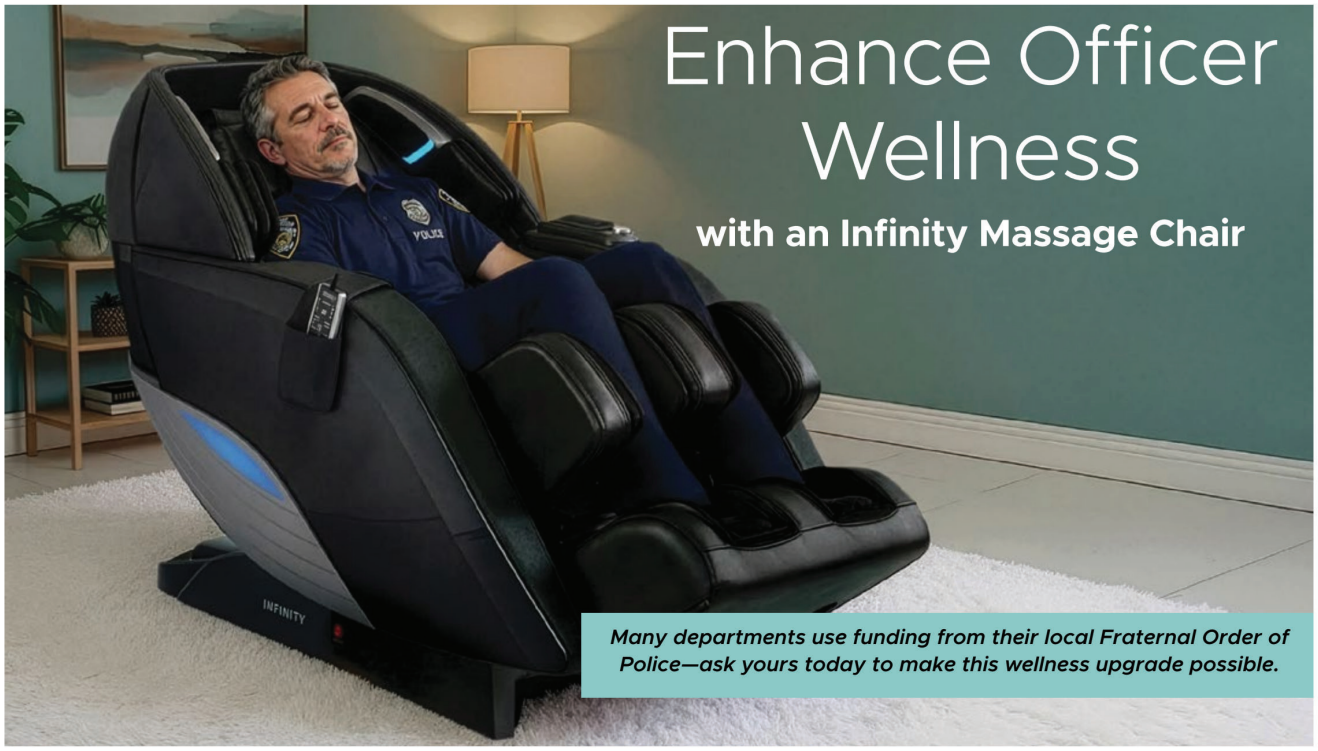
Search by attorney name, ZIP code, city or state, and filter by criminal, administrative or civil defense. Listings may include the attorney's firm, location, phone number, after-hours number, email address, case types and service area.

Once you find a potential attorney, reach out directly. Discuss their experience and availability, confirm they can take your matter, then save their regular and after-hours contact information somewhere you can access quickly.

Don't wait for an incident to occur. Talk with your local lodge leader, research the Plan attorneys in your area and make an informed choice before you need one.

Visit **foplegal.com/attorney-search** to begin your search. FOP

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~ Sarah Palmieri, HR Generalist, City of Rosemont MN

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SCAN TO SCHEDULE A MEETING

Bargaining for Success Seminar: Still Time to Register



The 2026 Bargaining for Success training seminar is just a month away, and there's still time to register.

Join us November 3–5 at the South Point Hotel Casino & Spa in Las Vegas for three days of practical, instructor-led training focused on the principles and strategies of successful collective bargaining.

Whether you're new to labor relations or a seasoned negotiator, this seminar will provide valuable insight from experienced National Fraternal Order of Police negotiators. Through classroom instruction and interactive exercises, you'll strengthen your bargaining skills and gain practical techniques you can apply immediately.

Training Topics Include:

- Best practices for successful collective bargaining
- Effective negotiation strategies
- Types of bargaining agreements
- Real-world bargaining techniques and practical classroom instruction

You'll leave with greater confidence, practical tools and a stronger understanding of today's labor relations challenges.

Register Today

To register, please complete and submit the following documents:

- 2026 Bargaining for Success Registration form
- Bargaining for Success Attendee Survey

Please email your completed

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FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

LEGAL DEFENSE PLAN



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registration form **and** attendee survey to: Stephanie Simpson at **ssimpson@nationalfop.org**.

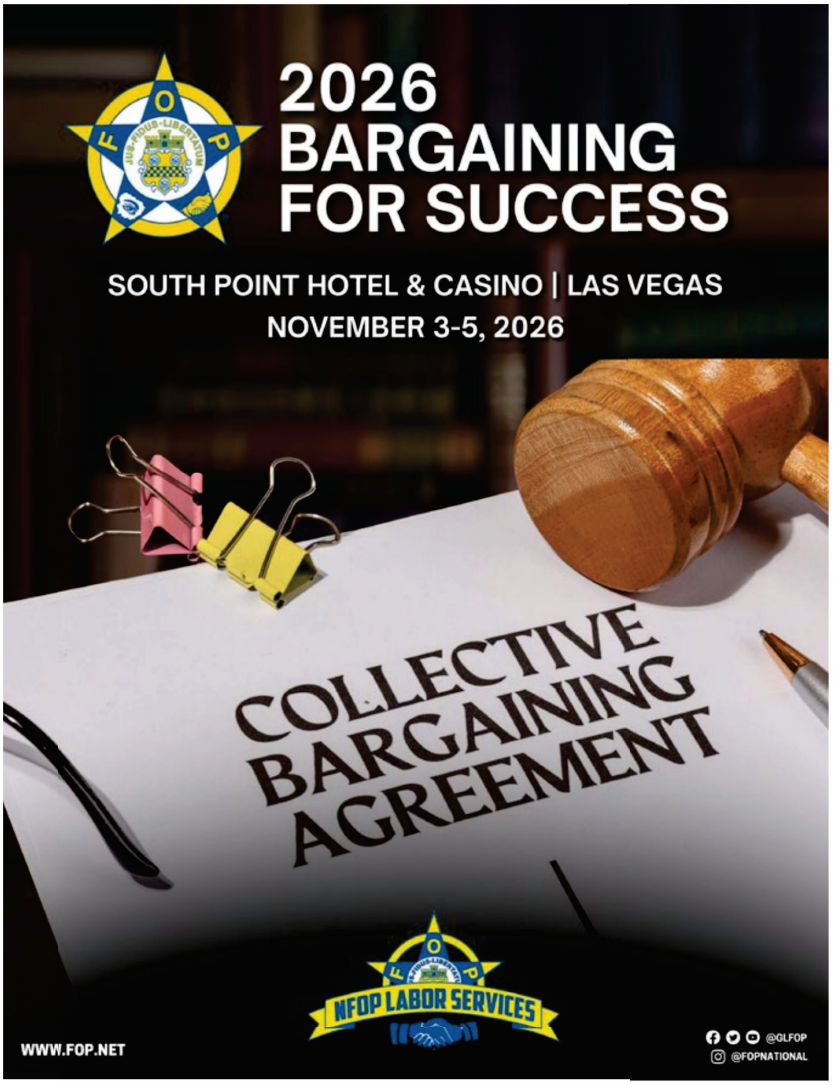
The attendee survey is used to assign bargaining teams prior to the seminar, so please submit it along with your registration form.

Go to **national.fop.net/bargainingforsuccess2026** for more information.

If you have questions, contact NFOP Labor Services at **labor@fop.net**.

Register today and invest in the skills that lead to successful negotiations. FOP

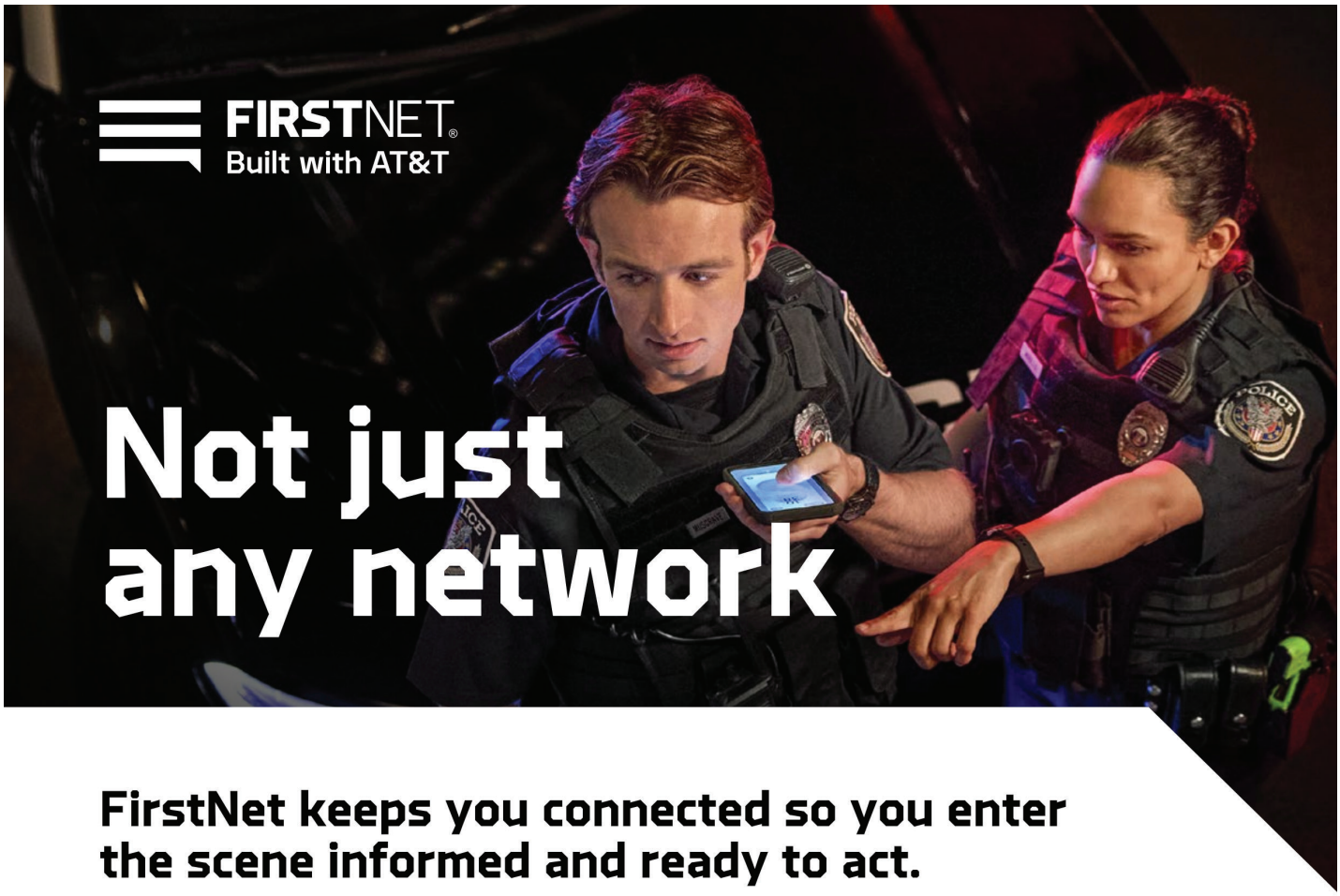
Scan the QR code for more information about NFOP Labor Services.



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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Two New Decisions Define the Limits of Electronic Searches



Electronic evidence has become a routine part of modern police work. Cellphones, internet provider (IP) addresses, peer-to-peer networks, cloud storage and other digital technologies can provide investigators with information that would have been unimaginable only a generation ago. But the constitutional rules governing that evidence still begin with familiar Fourth Amendment principles: Did the government conduct a search? If so, was a warrant required? And if officers obtained a warrant, did they stay within its scope?

Two recent decisions from the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit illustrate different sides of that analysis. In *United States v. Johnson*, the court held that law enforcement did not conduct a Fourth Amendment

Just the Facts:

» While technology continues to change at a rapid pace, the parameters of the Fourth Amendment hold fast for police officers executing warrants for digital evidence. As one case cited here reaffirms, information voluntarily exposed to others may fall outside Fourth Amendment protection even when technology makes it possible for investigators to analyze it in ways a user does not anticipate. Conversely, another case proves a warrant for one specifically identified electronic device does not necessarily authorize the search of other devices simply because the same person possesses it.

There Is ALWAYS Another Option
FOP Vetted and Approved Crisis Hotlines
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN CRISIS text: BLUE to: 741741
Crisis Text Line is free, 24/7, and confidential
988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE
COPLINE™ An Officer's Lifeline 1-800-267-5463
FOP.net/officer-wellness/crisis-hotlines

search by using software to receive and analyze information transmitted by a user over a publicly available peer-to-peer network. In *United States v. González-Arocho*, however, the court affirmed the suppression of evidence where agents searched a cellphone different from the specific device identified in their warrant. When read together, the cases show that digital investigations continue to turn on traditional Fourth Amendment questions: what information was exposed, how law enforcement obtained it and, when a warrant is required, the scope of the authority the warrant actually provides.

The first case, *United States v. Johnson*, 2026 WL 1959441 (1st Cir. July 7, 2026), involved Freenet, a publicly available peer-to-peer file-sharing network designed to allow users to exchange files while preserving their anonymity. Johnson chose Freenet's less-private Opennet mode, which connected his computer to unknown users and disclosed his IP address to neighboring computers. Freenet warned Opennet users that their identity and activity could potentially be traced.

Law enforcement was able to identify Johnson through Freenet Roundup, a modified version of the Freenet software developed for law enforcement to investigate the exchange of child sexual abuse material. Roundup participated in the network much like an ordinary Freenet user — it received file requests sent through the network, but it also logged and analyzed certain information accompanying those requests to identify requests associated with known child abuse material and determine whether they likely originated from the requesting computer. Using Roundup, investigators identified three requests associated with an IP address later determined to be Johnson's. The FBI then obtained a warrant to search Johnson's residence, where agents recovered electronic devices containing such materials.

Johnson moved to suppress, arguing that the government's warrantless use of Freenet Roundup was a Fourth Amendment search because law enforcement used specialized technology unavailable to ordinary users to defeat Freenet's anonymity. The First Circuit disagreed. The court applied the familiar reasonable-expectation-of-privacy framework originating in *Katz v. United States*. Under that framework, Fourth Amendment protection generally requires both a subjective expectation of privacy and an expectation that society is prepared to recognize as objectively reasonable. The court assumed Johnson may have subjectively expected privacy, but concluded that expectation was not objectively reasonable.

The critical distinction was between anonymity and privacy. Johnson may have intended to conceal his identity, but his computer was nevertheless transmitting information to unknown participants on a publicly accessible network. In Opennet mode, other participating computers could receive information associated with his requests, including his IP address. Law enforcement did not hack Johnson's computer, circumvent its security or remotely access private files. Rather, investigators received and analyzed information his computer transmitted through the network.

Therefore, the court concluded that Johnson could not establish a reasonable expectation of privacy in the information

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he voluntarily transmitted. The Supreme Court has long recognized that information knowingly exposed to the public generally falls outside Fourth Amendment protection. Although *Carpenter v. United States* cautions against mechanically applying that principle to certain categories of sensitive digital information, the First Circuit found *Carpenter* distinguishable. Freenet Roundup did not provide investigators with a comprehensive record of Johnson's movements or private life. Rather, it allowed them to analyze information associated with requests he voluntarily sent across the network. Thus, even though law enforcement used specialized technology to identify Johnson, the nature of the information obtained and how Johnson had exposed it remained central to whether a Fourth Amendment search occurred.

Two days after *Johnson*, the First Circuit addressed a different Fourth Amendment problem in *United States v. González-Arocho*, 2026 WL 1983490 (1st Cir. July 9, 2026). There, Homeland Security Investigations agents investigating the exchange of child sexual abuse material traced a participant in an online chatroom to a telephone number registered to González-Arocho. Records from the cellular provider showed that the number was associated with an iPhone 6s and provided the phone's unique International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number. Agents obtained a warrant specifically identifying that iPhone 6s, its telephone number and its IMEI number as the device to be searched.

When agents executed the warrant a week later, however, González-Arocho possessed an iPhone 13 Pro Max. Although the newer phone used the same telephone number, it was a different physical device. The agents seized and searched the iPhone 13 and later conducted a forensic examination that uncovered more than 100 files of child sexual abuse material.

González-Arocho moved to suppress the evidence. On appeal, the government conceded that the court could assume the agents had exceeded the warrant's scope, leaving the First Circuit to decide whether the good-faith exception to the exclusionary rule nevertheless permitted use of the evidence. The court held that it did not.

The warrant was unambiguous: it authorized the search of the identified iPhone 6s, not any device associated with the listed telephone number. The lead agent also acknowledged that he knew on the day of the search that the seized phone was an iPhone 13, and understood that the warrant was device-specific. Yet the agents never asked González-Arocho whether he still possessed the iPhone 6s or had replaced it with the newer phone.

Those circumstances prevented the government from establishing objective good faith. The Fourth Amendment requires warrants to "particularly describ[e] the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized." That particularity requirement limits officer discretion during execution of a warrant. Here, the warrant expressly identified a particular physical device. It did not authorize a search of any phone associated with González-Arocho, nor did it authorize the search of any device connected to the listed telephone number.

For officers and the attorneys who represent them, these cases illustrate two distinct points in the Fourth Amendment analysis. *Johnson* concerns the threshold question — whether government acquisition of digital information constitutes a search at all. Information voluntarily exposed to others may fall outside Fourth Amendment protection even when technology makes it possible for investigators to analyze that information in ways the individual did not anticipate. *González-Arocho*, by contrast, concerns the limits on police authority once a warrant is required. A warrant for one specifically identified electronic device does not necessarily authorize the search of another simply because the same person possesses it or the same telephone number is associated with it.

Technology will continue to change faster than Fourth Amendment doctrine. However, the fundamental questions remain the same: what information did law enforcement obtain? Did the individual have a reasonable expectation of privacy in it? And, if officers acted under a warrant, did the search remain within its scope? In the digital context, the answers can turn on small factual differences — public transmission versus private storage, anonymity versus privacy or one iPhone versus another. And those differences can determine whether critical evidence is admitted or suppressed. **FOP**



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When the Calls Go Quiet, the FOP Must Still Be There



"Pathways prepares our members to protect one another when the investigation begins, the headlines spread and an officer needs support the most."

Recently, I had a conversation with a retired sheriff about the Fraternal Order of Police and why our organization matters. During that conversation, he said something I have not been able to forget: "The sheriff or chief will not be the voice you hear after the initial incident. It will be internal affairs, investigators and your peers from the FOP."

His words were not intended as criticism. They were an honest description of what often happens after a critical incident.

Your chief, sheriff or command staff may call you or come to the scene. They may ask if you are all right and assure you that the agency is behind you. Then, the investigation begins. Lawyers become involved, official processes take over and leadership often grows quiet.

Suddenly, the voices you hear belong to internal affairs, criminal investigators, agency attorneys, reporters and people on social media who have already decided what happened.

Your decisions are examined frame by frame and second by second. People who were not there, did not feel the danger and did not have to make an immediate decision will have unlimited time to question yours.

Your name may appear in news reports. Your photograph may be shared across social media. Strangers may attack your integrity, question your character and judge your actions before the facts are known.

You may feel as if everyone is talking about you, but very few people are talking to you.

That is when the FOP must be there.

You Need Support Before the Dust Settles

It is easy for people to stand beside you after the investigation is complete, the headlines disappear and the outcome is known. By then, it is safe to offer a handshake, make a phone call or say, "We supported you all along."

But that is not when you need support the most.

You need it during the sleepless nights. You need it when your spouse is frightened, your children see the news and your family does not know what comes next. You need it while investigators are questioning your decisions and social media is attacking your character.

It's about making sure someone knows what to do when your world changes in a matter of seconds.

You especially need it when you begin questioning yourself.

You need someone who understands what it means to wear the badge.

That person may be an FOP representative who knows your rights. It may be a chaplain who sits quietly with your family. It may be a trained peer who recognizes that you are struggling even when you insist you are fine. It may simply be a fellow officer who calls, visits, listens and refuses to let you face your darkest days alone.

Those are the people who fill the silence after the official calls stop coming.

That is the FOP at its best.

You may feel as if everyone is talking about you, but very few people are talking to you. That is when the FOP must be there.

Pathways is Personal

Pathways is more than another training opportunity. It is not simply a conference, a collection of classes or another item to add to a professional résumé.

Pathways is about preparing our members to protect and care for one another.

It is about making sure someone knows what to do when your world changes in a matter of seconds. It is about developing people who can lead from the line, protect your rights, support your wellness, care for your family and stand beside you throughout the process.

Most importantly, Pathways is about you.

Wellness

The incident may last only seconds, but its effects can remain for years.

You may replay every decision in your mind. You may stop sleeping. You may become angry, withdrawn or distant from the people you love. You may tell everyone you are fine because that is what law enforcement officers have been conditioned to say.

Being affected does not mean you are weak. It means you are human.

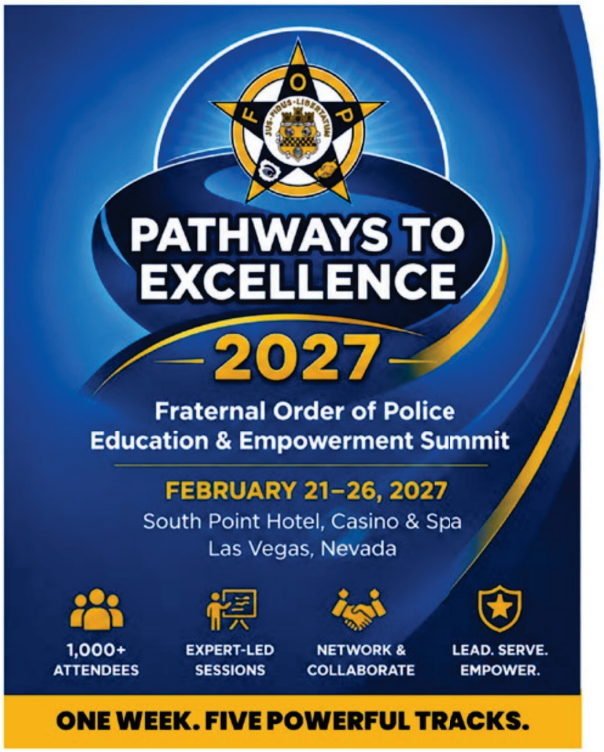
Pathways Wellness training helps members recognize the effects of trauma and understand when a fellow officer needs help. It prepares us to have difficult conversations before stress becomes a crisis. It also reminds us that protecting an officer's wellness is just as important as protecting that officer's career.

Leadership From the Line

A badge may show rank, but it does not determine who can lead.

Sometimes leadership is simply noticing that a fellow officer is not doing well. It is making the call, having the conversation,

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Choose Your Path.

WELLNESS PROFESSIONALS' FORUM
February 21 | $200
A day of learning and collaboration for mental health and wellness professionals.

LABOR/LEGAL LEADERSHIP FORUM
February 21–23 | $600
Gain the latest insights, legal strategies, and leadership tools to navigate today's evolving law enforcement environment.

WELLNESS SUMMIT
February 22–23 | $450
Breakout sessions, expert panels, and hands-on wellness activities to strengthen resilience.

CHAPLAINCY LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT
February 23–24 | $300
Equipping FOP chaplains to serve with compassion and confidence.

LEADERSHIP MATTERS
February 24–26 | $600
Practcical leadership training for new and aspiring law enforcement leaders.

Invest in yourself. Elevate your impact.

Customize Your Experience

Attend a single track or combine two tracks for a full week of learning and networking.

Wellness Professionals' Forum

February 21 | $200

Spend a full day focused on mental health and wellness in the law enforcement community, learning from leading voices in officer resilience. Connect and collaborate with fellow wellness professionals and walk away with practical tools you can put to use right away.

Labor/Legal Leadership Forum

February 21–23 | $600

Get the latest insights and legal strategies for today's evolving law enforcement environment, with focused training for attorneys and unions representing law enforcement. Stay ahead of the trends, sharpen your leadership skills, and connect with fellow leaders in a forum you won't want to miss.

Wellness Summit

February 22–23 | $450

Two days of breakout sessions, expert panels, and hands-on wellness activities designed to build real resilience for yourself and the officers you support. Learn alongside peers who understand the unique pressures of the profession and leave energized with fresh tools for personal and team wellness.

Chaplaincy Leadership and Development

February 23–24 | $300

Purpose-built training equips FOP chaplains to serve with compassion and confidence, sharpening the skills needed to support officers through their toughest moments. Gain fresh perspective from fellow chaplains and strengthen your calling with practical, faith-informed leadership tools.

Leadership Matters

February 24–26 | $600

Practical, hands-on leadership training built for new and aspiring law enforcement leaders covers proven strategies to lead your team through today's toughest challenges. Build the confidence and skills to step into your next leadership role while connecting with rising leaders from across the profession.

Register here October 1, 2026

Continued from page 38 >

challenging a bad decision or standing beside someone when others step away.

Leadership from the line prepares members to act with courage and purpose wherever they serve. We need officers who will not wait for permission to care. We need members who understand that leadership is not about a title. It is about responsibility.

Chaplaincy

There are moments when an officer or family does not need another explanation of policy or procedure. They need someone who will sit with them in the uncertainty.

A trained chaplain can provide a calm, compassionate and confidential presence during the most painful moments of an officer's life. Chaplains support our members through critical incidents, injuries, deaths, family crises and the emotional weight of the profession.

Sometimes the most powerful form of support is simply refusing to let someone suffer alone.

Labor and Legal Training

After a critical incident, every word and every decision can matter.

Officers must understand their rights before they are sitting across from an investigator. Lodge representatives must know how to respond before a member's career, reputation and future are placed at risk.

Good intentions are not enough. Saying "We will figure it out," is not enough. Our members deserve trained representatives who understand the process and are ready to act.

Labor and legal training helps ensure that when the questions begin, you have someone beside you who knows what protections apply and what steps must be taken.

Ask Yourself One Question

If one of your FOP brothers or sisters experiences the worst day of their career tomorrow, will your lodge be ready?

Will someone know how to protect that member's rights? Will someone support the family? Will someone understand the emotional toll? Will someone continue calling after everyone else has gone quiet?

Now ask the harder question: **If it happens to you tomorrow, who will be ready to stand beside you?**

That is why Pathways matters.

We cannot begin preparing after the crisis occurs. We cannot wait until a member is under investigation, overwhelmed and publicly attacked to discover that we do not have trained people or a support system in place.

Preparation must happen now.

We Must Be the Ones Who Stay

The retired sheriff's words continue to stay with me because they express a truth every officer needs to hear. When a critical incident happens, the initial expressions of support may fade as the official process takes control.

Internal affairs will do its job. Investigators will do theirs. Attorneys will offer advice, the media will report and social media will judge.

The FOP has a different responsibility.

Our responsibility is to stay.

We stay when the headlines are at their worst. We stay when the investigation seems endless. We stay when an officer's family is frightened and exhausted. We stay when our brother or sister feels abandoned, isolated and unsure of the future.

We do not wait until the dust settles and it becomes safe to show our support. We stand beside our members while the storm is still raging.

Pathways prepares us to keep that promise. Its training in wellness, leadership from the line, chaplaincy, and labor and legal matters gives us the knowledge and tools to become the support system our members deserve.

This is not about protecting only the agency, the administration or the person occupying the corner office. It is about protecting the people who serve.

It is about your wellness, your rights, your family, your career and your future. It is about preparing you to stand beside another member when that person's world is falling apart.

One day, the person who needs that support may be someone in your lodge.

One day, it may be you.

When the calls go quiet, the FOP must still be there. Pathways helps ensure that we are ready.

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FOP DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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Cops Serving Cops

ARK Trailer and Comfort Cottage Assist with National DART, Officer Wellness and Chaplaincy

What a blessing to witness our sisters and brothers of the Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police formally dedicate the Active Response Kit (ARK) Emergency Response Trailer and Comfort Cottage home.

This September, a dual dedication was hosted in Indianapolis. President Patrick Yoes, Treasurer James Smallwood and representatives from the Indiana, North Carolina and Kentucky FOP lodges joined alongside our National FOP Chaplaincy Network to publicly launch these two important projects.

Surrounded by state and local elected officials from both sides of the aisle, the ribbon cutting provided a tangible public offering of hope and support for law enforcement officers and their families.

The ARK Emergency Response Trailer is a mobile food and support trailer designed to provide resources for officers and communities in time of tragedy, trouble and crisis. It provides food, coffee, meals and a place to rest for first responders on the frontlines during manmade and natural disasters, line-of-duty deaths and other emergency responses.

It can also deliver tools, recovery and cleanup supplies, lodging for response teams and provides a private place for chaplaincy and wellness resource meetings.

This was a priority for our National FOP and now allows a chaplaincy trailer to be co-deployed alongside our Disaster Area Response Team (DART) on major incidents and deployments. The ARK is already known as "the blue oasis" by those who view it as a beacon of hope in the middle of their storms.

The Scripture Titus 3:14 reads: "Our people must learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help in cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."



Devoted to Good Works, Meeting Urgent Needs

This is what our National FOP Chaplaincy, the ARK trailer and partnerships across our state and local lodges are all about.

I want to personally thank Indianapolis FOP Vice President Bobby Ferguson, Secretary Adam Staab and Second Vice President Marco Zaragoza for their work and dedication to this effort. Well done, gents!

Additionally, the Indianapolis FOP now offers the Comfort Cottage, a four-bedroom, four-bathroom home for the purpose of providing a place of comfort for law enforcement officers and their families during times of need such as unexpected professional crisis, family displacement and hospital emergencies.

The Comfort Cottage is a safe and comfortable place to stay (free of charge) and provides comfort, support and lodging during difficult times for officers from across America. Think of it as a Ronald McDonald House for police families — this shall be a place of comfort for cops here, near and far.

The Comfort Cottage has already been used to house family members of an officer in Indiana who traveled to Indianapolis for an organ transplant. The officer's family members were able to have a safe, clean and protected place of comfort surrounded by their extended blue-line family during the lengthy surgery and recovery process.

The officer made it clear that knowing his family was taken care of while he focused on his medical procedures and recovery provided



a peace that surpasses all understanding… and that is priceless.

As you can see, this is about cops serving cops, and I want to thank my home lodge for their care, compassion and commitment to our sisters and brothers nationwide.

We give all the honor and glory to God Almighty who tells us through His son, Jesus the Christ: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

Yes, look at what the Lord has done.

Our Indy FOP chaplain, Dr. Christopher Holland, led us in prayer as we collectively joined together to dedicate these resources and provisions back to God and invite His will to be done through these vessels of both trailer and home, but most importantly, through the hands and feet of our law enforcement professionals who make up our local, state and National FOP. Amen

National FOP Chaplain Rick Snyder also serves as the president of the Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police. **FOP**







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