

**Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. Testimony for  
Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Members' Day**

**February 28, 2017**

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Serrano and the members of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations committee, due to scheduling conflicts this morning I will not be able to join you for today's Members' Day hearing. However, as a co-chair of the bipartisan House Law Enforcement Caucus, wanted to lend my support for full funding for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the grant programs it supports.

With tensions between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve on the rise, budget cuts threaten to exacerbate these conflicts and will jeopardize the COPS Office's valuable work. For over two decades, the COPS Office has provided critical resources to state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies across the country to advance community policing efforts that have reduced crime and made towns and cities across America safer.

These resources have helped implement initiatives to develop and test innovative policing strategies and provide training to community members, local government leaders, and all levels of law enforcement. One of the most critical programs the COPS Office oversees is the only federal competitive grant to hire law enforcement officers, the COPS Hiring Program. This program provides struggling communities with necessary funding to address their personnel needs.

Since its inception, the COPS Hiring Program has placed approximately 129,000 officers in communities across the United States to advance policing and reduce crime. These officers are our first line of defense. They are the first to respond to acts of domestic terrorism and they are increasingly being called upon by the federal government to assist with drug enforcement, gang elimination efforts, and, more recently, enforce immigration laws.

If the federal government continues to lean on the support of local law enforcement officials, we have a responsibility to ensure those departments have the support and resources necessary to carry out their critical mission to keep our communities safe. Staffing challenges not only jeopardize the safety of our men and women in uniform, but also exacerbate the breakdown in trust between law enforcement and community.

In fact, the study *The Effects of COPS Office Funding on Sworn Force Levels, Crimes, and Arrests*, completed by researchers from the University of Chicago, Duke University, and Cornell University, found that federal investment in local policing through the COPS Hiring Program led to a reduction in crime without a corresponding increase in arrests. This study demonstrates the effectiveness of community policing in reducing crimes while not exacerbating our nation's incarceration rates and the strain on local economies.

Unwavering support for the COPS Office and COPS Hiring Grant program is one of the best ways the Congress can show its support for the law enforcement community. As a result, I urge the committee to fully fund the COPS Office and COPS Hiring Grant program.