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CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

**RANKING MEMBER OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE**

**STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE JACKSON LEE AMENDMENT TO
H. RES. 40, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR LOCAL LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND CONDEMNING EFFORTS TO DEFUND
OR DISMANTLE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

MAY 10, 2023

- Mr. Chairman, my amendment removes provocative and vague language and disputed references from this Resolution in an effort to gain agreement around what should be its central point -- that we recognize and appreciate the service of *all* law enforcement officers and condemn all calls to abolish law enforcement agencies of *any kind*.

- First and foremost, my amendment strikes the word “local” anywhere it appears because we should state firmly that we support law enforcement officers – unconditionally.
- We know that all law enforcement – male, female, LGBTQ+, very experienced, rookie, patrol, or behind a desk – work tirelessly to protect us and keep us safe. Whether they are state, local, tribal, or federal agents or officers – we are grateful for their service.
- These are the individuals we rely on to stop a mass shooter as they open fire on Saturday shoppers at a mall in Texas; to guard and police our borders; to seek out predators behind a computer screen; or to help us locate an elderly or disabled loved one who has wandered off.
- And so, this Resolution, as it is currently written, ignores a large portion of dedicated officers who do not fall within the definition of “local law enforcement” – a term of art of which we legislators are well aware. My amendment corrects that omission and acknowledges the 137,000 federal agents and officers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia – including the United States Capitol Police.

- Secondly, my amendment eliminates problematic, unnecessary language and claims. For example, my amendment removes the claim that leftist activists and progressive politicians actively encouraged resentment toward law enforcement which casts a wide and unfair net. It also eliminates the claim that language regarding funding police vilifies and harms local law enforcement.
- We can all agree that we need law enforcement. Of that, there is no doubt. But defunding the police means different things to different people.
- From completely abolishing or disbanding law enforcement agencies – as some of my Republican colleagues have proposed we do to ATF, FBI, and even DOJ – to adding resources to other programs or services that might have been neglected in the past or to lighten the load of officers who are called upon to respond to too much.
- That is why I believe my amendment is sound. Let us come together on this Resolution, using language on which we all can agree – that does not accuse, demonize, or shame.
- I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment that makes a minor clarifying change so that we can move to the truly difficult work of making

policing safer for law enforcement officers and the public.

- I have worked for years [decades] to adopt reasonable gun violence prevention legislation and to institute transformative policing reforms.
- All too often law enforcement officers are taken by the violence we expect them to prevent. And increasingly, officers and agents are losing their lives to gun-related violence – oftentimes with handguns.
- Although the number of law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty decreased by more than 30 percent over the first six months of 2022 compared to that same period in 2021, the number of officers killed by guns increased by nearly 20 percent.
- And, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, for the whole of 2022, the number of officers killed decreased by roughly 61 percent – that is from 586 federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement officers killed in 2021 down to 224.
- Despite this dramatic decrease in line-of-duty deaths, due almost entirely to the significant reduction in deaths resulting from COVID-19, by the end of 2022, the same number of officers died by gunfire as in the previous year – reflecting a 21 percent increase over

the historical average of firearms-related deaths between 2010 and 2020. This is unacceptable.

- It is my hope that this Committee will soon markup legislation that will keep guns and other dangerous weapons out of the hands of those who seek to do harm to law enforcement officers or place them at risk. We have several bills from which we can choose.
- There's my bill, the *Kimberly Vaughan Safe Storage Act*; or the *Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act*; or *Protecting Our Kids*; or the *Assault Weapons Ban*; or the *Strengthening Protections for Domestic Violence and Stalking Survivors Act of 2023*, bipartisan legislation that I introduced along with Representative Debbie Dingell, because we know that responding to domestic violence calls can be especially dangerous for law enforcement.
- I would be glad to see any of these bills come before this Committee or to the floor for a vote this Congress. Or let us start a conversation on police-community relationships. Let's get back to the real work of this Committee.
- Thank you and I yield back.