

Testimony of  
**Chief Jeffrey Horvath**

Chief of Police  
Dover Police Department  
September 22, 2006

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Judiciary Committee Field Hearing  
Fighting Crime: The Challenges Facing Local Law Enforcement  
and the Federal Role  
Wilmington, DE

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Chairman Spector, Senator Biden thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today. I consider this an honor and a privilege. I am Jeffrey Horvath the Chief of Police of the City of Dover Police Department. I also serve on the Board of Directors of the Delaware Police Chiefs Council, I am the Vice Chairman of the Delaware Police Chiefs Foundation and I serve as the Delaware Chiefs' Representative to the State Association of Chiefs of Police (SACOP), which is a division of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). I only mention all of this because I'd like to think that I'm not just representing the ninety one sworn men and women of the Dover Police Department but that I'm also representing the Delaware Police Chiefs Council and the smaller departments of Kent and Sussex Counties.

I'd like to begin by talking about Dover. As I stated we have an authorized strength of ninety one sworn officers which makes Dover PD the fourth largest department in the state of Delaware. Our jurisdiction consists of the 29 square miles that make up the State's Capital. Although we face many challenges, I can state with absolute certainty that illegal drugs and the related crimes that surround them are our greatest challenge. My officers have heard me state time and time again that I believe at least eighty percent of all crime in Dover is either directly or indirectly related to the use and sale of illegal drugs, especially Crack Cocaine. An overwhelming majority of our shootings are drug related. The criminal who robs the innocent victim at the ATM is not using that money to buy food or clothes for their children. They are purchasing illegal drugs to feed their drug habit. I could go on and on with other examples. With that said, there are also three colleges, a university, Dover Downs International Speedway and the Dover Air Force Base in the city limits of Dover which add to our responsibilities and challenges.

When I was promoted to Chief in 2001, we had 81 sworn police officers. We have been able to increase our authorized strength by ten officers over the past five years. Six of the ten new officers are a direct result of my department securing federal grants through the COPS Program.

Without those funds we would not be as effective as we are today. Since adding officers to the force I have increased the size of the Drugs, Vice, and Organized Crime Unit and as a result we have been able to increase our pro-active drug arrests every year for the past five years. We now have two School Resource Officers assigned to the Capital School District. We were one of the last districts to obtain School Resource Officers and quite frankly it was long over due. Without the COPS Program we would not have had the manpower to place officers in Dover High School and Central Middle School. These officers have made an immediate impact and are providing a much safer environment for our children to learn. These officers have arrested drug dealers and had them removed from school. They have confiscated dangerous weapons and they have prevented acts of violence in the hallways and on the play ground. We have also added officers to our patrol force which, as you know, is the backbone to every police department.

I have also been fortunate enough to have a City Council that recently agreed to add four officers to the department to form what we call a Quality of Life Task Force. Quite simply, this four man unit targets the less serious and often overlooked crimes and violations that are occurring every day in our communities. Some of the crimes include loud parties, loud music, public intoxication, and loitering, just to name a few. Crimes like these are often not a priority of other police officers who simply do not have the time to deal with them due to the increased number of calls for service that all departments in Delaware are dealing with. The goal of this unit is to increase the quality of life throughout the city. These four officers have come across many more serious violations involving drugs and weapons while investigating seemingly minor incidents.

I would have preferred to use a COPS Grant to add the four officers to form the Quality of Life Task Force but the funding just isn't there anymore. I am fortunate to have a City Council that agreed we needed the additional officers. We were able to use funds generated from state's red light camera enforcement program to pay the cost of the additional officers. Most Chiefs can't report the same success in obtaining additional officers that I just shared with you. In fact, at my last SACOP meeting in March of this year several chiefs, were actually talking about having to reduce their number of police officers to meet budget cuts. Many other chiefs were complaining about the lack of federal funding which was preventing them from adding valuable and needed officers to their departments. Instead of securing federal grants to add officers to our streets, departments are forced to do more with the same number of officers. In some cases we are doing more with less.

Where has all the federal funding gone? In the proposed President's Federal budget the JAG Program, which was formed two years ago when they combined the Byrne Grant Program and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program, has been completely eliminated. The proposed budget also greatly reduces the COPS Program from 478.3 million in FY 2006 to just 102 million for FY 2007. The interesting part of that proposed reduction is that 100 million of the 102 million is actually carry over funds from previous budgets. This means the administration is only proposing 2 million in new funding for the COPS Office.

Some will argue, however, that additional funding has been proposed for the Department of Homeland Security. While I fully support and agree that we need more funding for Homeland Security, I think it's important that we don't "rob Peter to pay Paul". Homeland Security is extremely important but it is no more important than maintaining the core capabilities of local

law enforcement so they are able to meet the day to day challenges of protecting our communities from traditional acts of crime and violence. At a recent meeting of the IACP during a presentation explaining funding cuts to law enforcement in order to increase funding for Homeland Security one chief commented that his jurisdiction had experienced fourteen homicides to date this year and, to the best of his knowledge, Osama Bin Laden was not a suspect in any of them.

Through the Department of Homeland Security each police department in Delaware has received protective gear, numerous items of necessary equipment and valuable training. While our protective gear sits in our trunks and gets closer to reaching an expiration date as each day passes, none of the Department of Homeland Security funds can be used to hire more police officers and we can no longer afford to add officers to our departments.

Hometown Security is Homeland Security. Local law enforcement has demonstrated this on numerous occasions. The arrests of Timothy McVeigh and Eric Rudolph by local police officers are examples of the critical role that local law enforcement officers play in homeland security. Homeland Security should include ensuring that state and local law enforcement agencies continue to place officers out in the communities, interacting with citizens and investigating suspicious behavior.

In closing I would just like to say that Federal Grant Funds have been extremely important to local law enforcement agencies in Delaware and across the Country. The Dover Police Department has received over 1.2 million in Federal Grants over the past ten years. Former Chief of Police and Former Mayor James Hutchinson also used Federal Grants to add numerous police officers to our department in previous years. By properly funding the Community Oriented Policing and the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Programs we will be able to ensure that law enforcement agencies are able to meet the day to day challenges of protecting their communities and we will ensure that state and local law enforcement officers are able to be key partners in our nation's homeland security efforts.