

Testimony of
Chief Jeffrey Horvath

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Chairman Biden, Senator Graham thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today. I consider this an honor and a privilege. I am the Chief of Police of the City of Dover Police Department. I currently 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 Delaware's representative to the State Association of Chiefs of Police (SACOP), which is a division of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police (IACP). I'd like to think that I'm not just here representing the ninety one sworn men and women of the Dover Police Department but that I am also representing the Delaware Police Chiefs Council and the smaller departments of the state of Delaware.

Dover is the Capital of the State of Delaware and the Dover Police Department is the fourth largest police force in the state. Our jurisdiction consists of 29 square miles. I can state with absolute certainty that the use and sale of illegal drugs is the greatest challenge for the men and women of my department. A majority of our serious and violent crimes are directly or indirectly related to the use and sale of illegal drugs. In the 1990's there was a violent crime crisis across this country. This crisis also affected the City of Dover. In the 1990's the rise in violent crime peaked at 73% in Dover. The COPS program helped communities, like Dover, to put more police officers on our street and in our schools. Over the next few years we saw violent crime drop by 35% in Dover alone.

Since I became the Chief of Police in March of 2001, I have been able to increase the authorized strength of the department from eighty one sworn officers to ninety one sworn men and women. Six of those officers were funded by the COPS program. Four officers were added to patrol our streets and neighborhoods and two were placed in our schools to work as School Resource Officers. There is no measure to properly show the value of these officers. Without a doubt the addition of these six officers has made the Dover Police Department a stronger force.

Violent crime is back on the rise. In the last two years alone violent crime has risen 30% in Dover. It is important that we get back to basics. There are departments in the State of Delaware and across the country that need more police officers on the streets equipped with the tools and resources needed to keep our communities safe. The best way to help us is to fully fund the COPS program.

Since September 11, 2001 the federal focus has been taken off of street crime and eliminated funding for COPS hiring. Much of the funding has been moved to the Department of Homeland Security. While I support the need for increased Homeland Security funding, I think it is vital

that we don't forget our most important security function which is "hometown" security. As I, and many other chiefs before me, have stated "hometown security is homeland security". Local law enforcement has demonstrated this on numerous occasions.

Law enforcement is being asked to do more with less. If we have fewer police on the streets to prevent crime and to protect our communities we will see a rise in crime across this country. That is inevitable. The COPS program used to be funded at over 1 billion dollars. It has been cut to \$20 million in fiscal year 2008. The president's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 would completely eliminate the COPS program. As a police chief I consider this madness. COPS grants have funded 463 additional police officers and sheriff's deputies to engage in community policing activities, including crime prevention, in Delaware. Forty local and state law enforcement agencies in Delaware have directly benefited from funding made available through the COPS office. Nearly \$1.6 million has been awarded to thirteen school resource officers to improve safety for students, teachers and administrators in primary and secondary schools throughout Delaware. Over \$10 million has been awarded for crime fighting technologies which have allowed officers to spend more time on the streets of Delaware fighting and preventing crime through many time-saving technologies, information sharing systems and improved communications equipment.

The Byrne Justice Assistance Grants were previously funded at over \$900 million before the current administration took over. For fiscal year 2008, this funding has been cut by 67% from \$520 million to \$170 million. The President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 eliminates the Byrne JAG funding completely. These proposed cuts jeopardize numerous programs in Delaware which could affect the quality of life of our citizens.

In closing, federal grant funds have been extremely important to local law enforcement agencies in Delaware and across the country. My department has received over 1.2 million in federal grants over the past 10 years. These funds have greatly assisted the Dover Police Department in its mission to protect the citizens and visitors of Dover, Delaware. By properly funding the COPS Programs and the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Programs we will be able to better ensure the success of our law enforcement efforts in preventing and reducing crime.