

**Questions for the Record from Senator Charles E. Grassley for Sheriff Michael Bouchard,
Vice President of Government Affairs, Major County Sheriffs of America
U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
“Law Enforcement Officer Safety: Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve”
July 26, 2022**

- 1) **You testified that you’ve witnessed an increase in attacks on police officers in your county. In your position with the Major County Sheriffs of America, have you seen this trend become pervasive across the nation? Is it centralized or disproportionately occurring in any particular regions?**

We are witnessing an increase in attacks on law enforcement across the country. We are seeing this trend become pervasive across urban, suburban, and rural regions. I highlighted several recent high-profile examples of assaults on law enforcement in my testimony, but there have been several incidents since then, including a K9 officer in Richmond, Indiana, who was shot in the head while conducting a K9 sniff on a traffic stop and an attempted attack on an FBI building in Cincinnati. Violence is an unfortunate part of our job and anyone who signs up for this career knows they will face physical violence at some point, but we have to work tirelessly to counter it, discourage it, and deter it.

- 2) **What do you see as some of the most substantial reasons for the increase in attacks and use of force against police officers that you referenced in your testimony? And how can Congress, in your view, help to combat these situations?**

I’ve been in this profession since the mid-1970s and some of the differences we are seeing today in our interactions with the public are alarming. While most of our daily contacts with the community are positive, the number of assaults on officers is up significantly. This is for a host of many complex reasons, but respect for each other, let alone respect for authority, seems to have greatly diminished in our society. We need Congress to come together with law enforcement and clearly state that the place to fight police or criminal charges is in the court room, not on the street.

- 3) **You testified that you support the expansion of data collection on law enforcement. In what ways would collecting these types of data increase your ability train, prepare, and inform your deputies for physical encounters?**

The proposed legislation would provide law enforcement agencies with data that will help expand our understanding of these assaults on law enforcement officers and why they are happening. In turn, this will allow us to better identify motives, trends, and any coordinated efforts, which will allow us to improve our training protocols to ensure better outcomes when officers and deputies are faced with these types of situation.

- 4) **You testified that more than ever, officers would not recommend their friends, family, or children pursue a profession in law enforcement. In your view, how can we work to reverse this trend and encourage young people to follow this essential line of work? In particular, what can Congress do to help in that effort?**

The demonization of police has added to the diminished respect and responsiveness to their authority. Quite frankly, the police of today are the Vietnam veterans of yesterday. Our society asks them to do an incredibly challenging and difficult job and then too often demonizes them for doing so. It is important for Congress to use their offices as a bully pulpit to push back on those seeking to demonize the law enforcement profession and to continue to support those who wake up and put on a uniform every single day.

5) Do you believe that private gun ownership played a significant role in the 20 year high in police murders in 2021?

I do not believe that responsible private gun owners played any significant role in the 20-year high in police murders in 2021.

6) Are more attacks on police with firearms illegal firearms or illegally *possessed* firearms? In other words, is the problem of gun violence against police a “who” or a “what”?

I believe the issue is tied in with criminals illegally possessing firearms as well as prosecutors across the country who have enacted blanket policies not to prosecute certain gun crimes and who take non-enforcement approaches to the laws enacted. I believe this inaction is directly correlated to the rise in violent crime we are seeing across the nation.

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
“Law Enforcement Officer Safety: Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve”
Questions for the Record
for Sheriff Michael Bouchard
Submitted August 2, 2022

1. Please provide any thoughts or feedback on one or all of the following topics:
 - a. **S. 4003, the Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act of 2022,¹ which Senator Cornyn and I introduced to help law enforcement respond more effectively to people suffering mental or behavioral health crises, and which the Senate Judiciary Committee reported out favorably in May 2022.**

Increasing numbers of individuals with mental illnesses are coming into contact with the criminal justice system, which has stressed law enforcement’s ability to meet the needs of those in crisis. The Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act will provide law enforcement with necessary resources for quality training to enhance our ability to safely interact with those suffering from mental health conditions and connect them with mental and behavioral health services. Major County Sheriffs of America has supported and will continue to support this legislation.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4003>.

Questions from Senator Thom Tillis
for All Witnesses

- 1. Do you agree that the *Protect and Serve Act* will successfully deter attacks on our brave men and women in blue? Why or why not?**

I believe that creating enhanced federal penalties for anyone who targets law enforcement officers and purposefully harms them in the execution of a crime is a good first step. We must hold those who target and assault law enforcement officers accountable for their actions and I believe this bill could serve as a deterrent against future attacks on law enforcement.

- 2. Other than the *Protect and Serve Act*, what other actions can Congress take to support law enforcement and stop these senseless and violent attacks?**

It is important for Congress to use their offices as a bully pulpit to push back on those seeking to demonize the law enforcement profession and to continue to support those who wake up and put on a uniform every single day. We need Congress to come together with law enforcement and clearly state that the place to fight police or criminal charges is in the court room, not on the street.