



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.E.
WASHINGTON, DC 20002
PHONE 202-547-8189 • FAX 615-202-547-8190

CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

30 January 2019

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

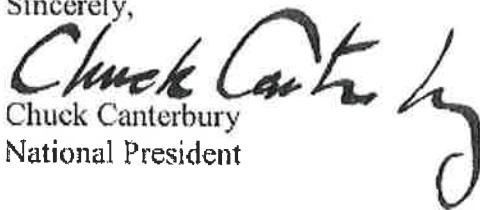
Dear Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the more than 345,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I would like to thank you for your invitation to share the views of our members on the nomination of William P. Barr to be the next Attorney General of the United States. We strongly support this nomination and look forward to the Committee's consideration early next month.

I am pleased to respond to questions for the record from Senators Hirono and Klobuchar. I have attached those responses to this letter.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President

ANSWER IN RESPONSE TO SENATOR HIRONO, Question (a)

Under the leadership of former U.S. Assistant Attorney General Vanita Gupta, the FOP and the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice enjoyed a professional and collaborative working relationship. She changed the tone and approach of the Civil Rights Division from an adversarial one to a more collaborative one. To achieve this, she sometimes called upon the Collaborative Reform Initiative within the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) for assistance. While there is always dynamic tension between the regulator and the regulated, we felt that our relationship with AAG Gupta lent itself to a more productive and less destructive give-and-take.

It is important to recognize, however, that it is the Civil Rights Division that serves as the formal investigative component and not the COPS Office, which is largely unfamiliar with the legal aspects of such investigations and their remedies. Under former Attorney General Sessions, collaborative reform efforts are not triggered by a Civil Rights Division investigation. Instead, these efforts are now pro-active and outreach-based, allowing agencies to seek assistance and support on their own initiative.

If the Justice Department had ended collaborative reform efforts, then Ms. Gupta's criticism would be valid. However, this is not the case—the Collaborative Reform Initiative and Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC) has assembled a remarkable coalition of labor and police management membership organizations, including the FOP and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and is delivering much needed resources and support to the local level at no cost to these agencies.

We would submit that this Justice Department is actually doing a better job at assisting agencies with collaborative reform with the newly implemented structure.

ANSWER IN RESPONSE TO SENATOR HIRONO, Question (b)

If Mr. Barr is confirmed as Attorney General, we would urge him to continue with the existing collaborative model and support the ongoing work of CRI-TAC, which is designed to meet the wide range of needs in local, State and tribal law enforcement agencies of every size and in every region of the country. The new approach focuses on developing local solutions and strategies by drawing on a national pool of subject matter experts from the field. The process is both collaborative and comprehensive, employing the latest innovations in community policing supported by evidence-based practices.

The FOP is proud to be a very active part of this effort to promote anti-crime measures and improved policing strategies, combined with a strong commitment to community outreach and engagement, benefiting the agencies and the communities they serve.

ANSWER IN RESPONSE TO SENATOR KLOBUCHAR

The programs administered by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) are among the most critical for local, State and tribal law enforcement. We are particularly grateful to you, Senator Klobuchar, for your leadership in protecting and expanding these programs and for sponsoring the reauthorization of the COPS Office in the last several Congresses. We look forward to working with you again on this issue.

The COPS Office administers a variety of programs, including the:

- Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS);
- Community Policing Development (CPD) Program;
- School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP);
- COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program (CAMP); and
- COPS Anti-Heroin Task Force (AHTF) Program.

In 2016, you helped the FOP by cosponsoring S. 2840/PL 114-199, the Protecting Our Lives by Initiating COPS Expansion (POLICE) Act, which established a new program within the COPS Office to help train law enforcement officers to respond to active shooter situations. The bill was signed into law and now the Preparing for Active Shooter Situations (PASS) Program is able to assist with agencies who need this type of training.

The COPS Office assumed the administration of the National Blue Alert Program, a public safety program designed to enlist the help of the public to capture individuals who attack or kill law enforcement officers.

The recently enacted Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act is currently being implemented by the COPS Office and will no doubt build upon the research and results they have had to date as part of their Officer Safety and Wellness program.

Of course, the primary mission of the COPS Office is to get more officers on the street through the hiring program which is the central tenet in our nation's community oriented policing strategy. This approach was validated by a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study of the COPS program which stated: "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in the rates of total index crimes, violent crimes, and property crime."

We believe that community oriented policing is the most effective way to promote public safety and to enhance the quality of life in a community. By involving the community, the police have more resources available to help in crime prevention. By familiarizing themselves with the members of the community, officers are more likely to obtain valuable information about criminals and their activities, and they are more likely to obtain a reliable evaluation of the needs of citizens and their expectations of the police. The work of the COPS Office and its local, State and tribal partners provides the community with a sense of commitment, reliability and trust from law enforcement. Without the trust and involvement of the community, our streets and neighborhoods are less safe.

We also believe that the independence of the COPS Office is critical to the success it has had. There have been proposals, regulatory and statutory, that seek to make this vital component of our national policing strategy just another grant program under the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).

Unlike some Federal programs which provide assistance to local, State and tribal law enforcement, the COPS Office has cultivated and maintained excellent partnerships with officers in the field. The office and its staff draw on real world experience, as many are former law enforcement officers. The officers in the field know this and the COPS Office enjoys their full confidence and trust. The COPS Office is a brand and to subjugate the office to the BJA would anonymize it and ultimately erode that trust and, subsequently, its value to the men and women in law enforcement. We will look to you and our new Attorney General to help the COPS Office maintain its independence and value to our nation's law enforcement officers.