

Washington Watch: Legislative Update For the Week of 9 October 2017

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I. LEGISLATIVE NEWS AND ACTIVITY

National President Chuck Canterbury and Jim Pasco, Senior Advisor to the National President, met with:

- R. Alexander Acosta, Secretary for the U.S. Department of Labor, to discuss law enforcement pension and retirement benefits as well as diversity issues;
- John M. Gore, Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and his Chief of Staff and Counsel, J. Benjamin Aguinaga, along with J. Vincent Canales, Maryland State Lodge President, and John W. Teletchea, President of Maryland Lodge #89, to discuss the ongoing investigation;
- Representative Cedric L. Richmond (D-LA), Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, along with Clarence E. Cox III and Dwayne A. Crawford, the National President and Executive Director respectively of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) to discuss police-community relations, law enforcement pension and retirement benefit issues and other issues of mutual concern. Representatives Andre Carson (D-IN), James E. Clyburn (D-SC), Valdez V. Demings (D-FL) and Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) also participated.

Senior Legislative Liaison Richardson represented the FOP at the National Officer's Safety and Wellness Group meeting.

Senior Legislative Liaison Richardson and Legislative Liaison Michael Martin:

- Met with staff in the office of Charles E. Grassley (R-IA) to discuss criminal justice reform legislation;
- Met with staff in the office of Representative Louis J. Barletta (R-PA) to discuss the priorities of the FOP; and
- Spoke with staff in the office of Valdez V. Demings (D-FL) to discuss H.R. 2228, the "Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act,"; and
- Attended a law enforcement stakeholder meeting to discuss efforts to reform asset forfeiture

Senior Legislative Liaison Richardson and Legislative Liaison Scott Marks participated in

a conference call with Sue Auriemma of *KIDSANDCARS*, to discuss S. 1666 the, “Helping Overcome Trauma for Children Alone in Rear Seats (HOT CARS) Act.”

II. THIS WEEK IN CONGRESS

The House was in session this week, while the Senate was in recess.

Action in the House

The House considered and passed S. 585, the “Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act,” on a 420-0 vote. The bill now goes to the President to be signed into law.

The House considered and passed H.R. 1616, the “Strengthening State and Local Cyber Crime Fighting Act,” by unanimous consent. The bill, which the FOP supports, now goes to the President, who is expected to sign it into law.

Action in House Committees

The Committee on the Judiciary considered and favorably reported H.R. 2228, “Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act,” on a voice vote. The bill, which FOP helped to craft and strongly supports, now goes to the House floor for further consideration.

III. UPDATE ON TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

For the complete list of cosponsors for all of our top legislative priorities, or to find out if your Representative and Senators are cosponsors of specific bills, check out <https://www.congress.gov/>

A. Support H.R. 1205/S. 915, the "Social Security Fairness Act"

We have 148 cosponsors on H.R. 1205.

We have 9 cosponsors on S. 915.

B. Support the H.R. 964/S. 424, the "Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act"

Two additional law makers have co- sponsored H.R. 964. We have 30 cosponsors.

We have 3 cosponsors on S. 424.

IV. FOP NEWS: *Police Mental Health Bill Passes House Committee*

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, was proud to announce that the House Committee on the Judiciary favorably reported H.R. 2228, the “Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act.” The bill is sponsored by Representatives Susan W. Brooks (R-IN) and Valdez V. Demings (D-FL). Representatives Douglas A. Collins (R-GA), William J. Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and David G. Reichert (R-WA) are original cosponsors.

“We helped develop this legislation late last Congress and it passed the Senate as S. 867 in May,” Canterbury said. “We’re very pleased to have worked with Chairman Goodlatte

and Ranking Member Conyers to move this bill through Committee in an effort to improve the mental health and wellness of our nation's police officers."

The legislation directs the U.S. Attorney General to identify existing mental health and wellness programs, especially those administered by the U.S. Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs, and then develop model policies which could be adopted by State, local and tribal law enforcement agencies. It also authorizes the establishment of pilot peer mentoring programs using Federal grants.

"Our officers wear protective clothing and other equipment to keep themselves safe from physical harm, but these officers also face challenges to their mental health and well-being. Unlike many other professions, sometimes you can't leave the job at the office," Canterbury said. "The FOP has been a leader on mental wellness for law enforcement officers and we believe we can provide better support for the men and women behind the badge. We are proud to support the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act and look forward to getting this bill to the President's desk."

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