



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

*Representing America's Finest*

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### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON

Executive Director

January 26, 2009

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman, Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), representing 241,000 law enforcement officers from across the United States, I would like to thank you for recognizing the importance of promoting and protecting the safety of our nation's communities during this time of economic downturn. By including \$4 billion in funding for state and local law enforcement assistance grant programs – the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) hiring program and the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) program – you are ensuring that law enforcement has the resources it needs to do its job effectively.

With the support of the COPS Program in particular, community policing has been a dominant force behind the dramatic reduction in crime this nation has witnessed over the past 13 years. In 2000, violent crime rates were at their lowest level in thirty years, particularly in large cities. More police officers patrolling the streets not only provide greater police presence in our communities but also increase police knowledge of crime problems as well.

While we are truly appreciative of the \$1 billion in funding for the COPS hiring program, we believe that limiting the program funds to be used solely for the hiring of new officers is too narrow. In this time when state and local budgets coffers are tighter than ever, police departments are not only undermanned, they are also losing the ability to retain their qualified, active officers. If a department is not able to retain its experienced police officers, who have developed relationships with their neighborhoods, community policing suffers greatly.

State and local law enforcement agencies, especially those in bigger cities, are being told that they will not only be facing wage freezes, but also personnel cuts due to budget shortfalls. Allowing COPS hiring funding to be used for officer retention would save departments from having to fire desperately needed officers. While a municipality could use the stimulus funds to hire new officers to replace those who have been let go, it makes much more sense fiscally and for the safety of the community to allow the funds to also be used for retention.

NAPO urges you to support the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act with this vital law enforcement funding intact to ensure that not only jobs are created and protected, but also that our neighborhoods are safe. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or NAPO's Government Affairs Director, Andrea Mournighan, at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson  
Executive Director