

The resolution before us (H. Res. 263) can serve as a stepping stone for real action to protect our children and help them flourish. I am proud to support it.

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Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 263, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COPS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1700) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1700

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "COPS Improvements Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. COPS GRANT IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 1701 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

“(a) *GRANT AUTHORIZATION.*—The Attorney General shall carry out grant programs under which the Attorney General makes grants to States, units of local government, Indian tribal governments, other public and private entities, multi-jurisdictional or regional consortia, and individuals for the purposes described in subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e).”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking the subsection heading text and inserting “COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION GRANTS”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “, to increase the number of officers deployed in community-oriented policing”;

(C) by amending paragraph (4) to read as follows:

“(4) award grants to pay for or train officers hired to perform intelligence, anti-terror, or homeland security duties.”;

(D) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) award grants to hire school resource officers and to establish school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and local school systems to combat crime, gangs, drug activities, and other problems in and around elementary and secondary schools.”;

(E) by striking paragraph (9);

(F) by redesignating paragraphs (10) through (12) as paragraphs (9) through (11), respectively;

(G) by striking paragraph (13);

(H) by redesignating paragraphs (14) through (17) as paragraphs (12) through (15), respectively;

(I) in paragraph (14), as so redesignated, by striking “and” at the end;

(J) in paragraph (15), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(K) by adding at the end the following:

“(16) establish and implement innovative programs to reduce and prevent illegal drug manufacturing, distribution, and use, including the manufacturing, distribution, and use of methamphetamine; and

“(17) establish criminal gang enforcement task forces, consisting of members of Federal, State, and local law enforcement authorities (including Federal, State, and local prosecutors), for the coordinated investigation, disruption, apprehension, and prosecution of criminal gangs and offenders involved in local or multi-jurisdictional gang activities; and

“(18) award enhancing community policing and crime prevention grants that meet emerging law enforcement needs, as warranted.”;

(3) by striking subsection (c);

(4) by striking subsections (h) and (i);

(5) by redesignating subsections (d) through (g) as subsections (f) through (i), respectively;

(6) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

“(c) *TROOPS-TO-COPS PROGRAMS.*—

“(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Grants made under subsection (a) may be used to hire former members of the Armed Forces to serve as career law enforcement officers for deployment in community-oriented policing, particularly in communities that are adversely affected by a recent military base closing.

“(2) *DEFINITION.*—In this subsection, ‘former member of the Armed Forces’ means a member of the Armed Forces of the United States who has been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States.

“(d) *COMMUNITY PROSECUTORS PROGRAM.*—The Attorney General may make grants under subsection (a) to pay for additional community prosecuting programs, including programs that assign prosecutors to—

“(1) handle cases from specific geographic areas; and

“(2) address counter-terrorism problems, specific violent crime problems (including intensive illegal gang, gun, and drug enforcement and quality of life initiatives), and localized violent and other crime problems based on needs identified by local law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and others.

“(e) *TECHNOLOGY GRANTS.*—The Attorney General may make grants under subsection (a) to develop and use new technologies (including interoperable communications technologies, modernized criminal record technology, and forensic technology) to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in reorienting the emphasis of their activities from reacting to crime to preventing crime and to train law enforcement officers to use such technologies.”;

(7) in subsection (f), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “to States, units of local government, Indian tribal governments, and to other public and private entities.”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “define for State and local governments, and other public and private entities,” and inserting “establish”;

(C) in the first sentence of paragraph (3), by inserting “(including regional community policing institutes)” after “training centers or facilities”; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) *EXCLUSIVITY.*—The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services shall be the exclusive component of the Department of Justice to perform the functions and activities specified in this paragraph.”;

(8) in subsection (g), as so redesignated, by striking “may utilize any component”, and all that follows and inserting “shall use the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services of the Department of Justice in carrying out this part.”;

(9) in subsection (h), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “subsection (a)” the first place that term appears and inserting “paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b)”;

(B) by striking “in each fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a)” and inserting “in each fiscal year for purposes described in paragraph (1) and (2) of subsection (b)”;

(10) in subsection (i), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “the Federal share shall decrease from year to year for up to 5 years” and inserting “unless the Attorney General waives the non-Federal contribution requirement as described in the preceding sentence, the non-Federal share of the costs of hiring or rehiring such officers may be less than 25 percent of such costs for any year during the grant period, provided that the non-Federal share of such costs shall not be less than 25 percent in the aggregate for the entire grant period, but the State or local government should make an effort to increase the non-Federal share of such costs during the grant period”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The preceding sentences shall not apply with respect to any program, project, or activity provided by a grant made pursuant to subsection (b)(4).”; and

(11) by adding at the end the following:

“(j) *RETENTION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICER POSITIONS.*—For any grant under paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (b) for hiring or rehiring career law enforcement officers, a grant recipient shall retain each additional law enforcement officer position created under that grant for not less than 12 months after the end of the period of that grant, unless the Attorney General waives, wholly or in part, the retention requirement of a program, project, or activity.”.

(b) *APPLICATIONS.*—Section 1702 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd-1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “, unless waived by the Attorney General” after “under this part shall”; and

(B) in paragraph (8), by striking “share of the cost” and all that follows and inserting “share of the costs during the grant period, how the applicant will maintain the increased hiring level of the law enforcement officers, and how the applicant will eventually assume responsibility for all of the costs for such officers.”; and

(2) by striking subsection (d).

(c) *RENEWAL OF GRANTS.*—Section 1703 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd-2) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 1703. RENEWAL OF GRANTS.

“(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Except as provided in subsection (b), a grant made under this part may be renewed, without limitations on the duration of such renewal, to provide additional funds if the Attorney General determines that the funds made available to the recipient were used in a manner required under an approved application and if the recipient can demonstrate significant progress in achieving the objectives of the initial application.

“(b) *GRANTS FOR HIRING.*—Grants made under this part for hiring or rehiring additional career law enforcement officers may be renewed for up to 5 years, except that the Attorney General may waive such 5-year limitation for good cause.”.

“(c) *NO COST EXTENSIONS.*—Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b), the Attorney General may extend a grant period, without limitations as to the duration of such extension, to provide additional time to complete the objectives of the initial grant award.”.

(d) *LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.*—Section 1704 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd-3) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “that would, in the absence of Federal funds received under this part, be made available from State or local sources” and inserting “that the Attorney General determines would, in the absence of Federal funds received

under this part, be made available for the purpose of the grant under this part from State or local sources"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The preceding sentence shall not apply with respect to funds made available under this part by a grant made pursuant to subsection (a) for the purposes described in subsection (b)(4)."; and

(2) by striking subsection (c).

(e) **STUDY OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.**—Section 1705 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd-4) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d) **STUDY OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.**—

"(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Attorney General shall provide for a scientific study of the effectiveness of the programs, projects, and activities funded under this part in reducing crime.

"(2) **STUDY.**—The Attorney General shall select one or more institutions of higher education, including historically Black colleges and universities, to conduct the study described in paragraph (1).

"(3) **REPORTS.**—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of the COPS Improvements Act of 2007, the institution or institutions selected under paragraph (2) shall report the findings of the study described in paragraph (1) to the Attorney General. Not later than 30 days after the receipt of such report, the Attorney General shall report such findings to the appropriate committees of Congress, along with any recommendations the Attorney General may have relating to the effectiveness of the programs, projects, and activities funded under this part in reducing crime."

(f) **ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.**—Section 1706 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd-5) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking "**REVOCAATION OR SUSPENSION OF FUNDING**" and inserting "**ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS**"; and

(2) by striking "revoke or suspend" and all that follows and inserting "take any enforcement action available to the Department of Justice."

(g) **DEFINITIONS.**—Section 1709(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd-8(1)) is amended by inserting "who is a sworn law enforcement officer" after "permanent basis".

(h) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—Section 1001(a)(11) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(11)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking "1,047,119,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2009" and inserting "1,150,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2013"; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking "3 percent may be used for technical assistance under section 1701(d)" and inserting "5 percent may be used for technical assistance under section 1701(f)"; and

(B) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: "Of the funds available for grants under part Q, not less than \$600,000,000 shall be used for grants for the purposes specified in section 1701(b), not more than \$200,000,000 shall be used for grants under section 1701(d), and not more than \$350,000,000 shall be used for grants under section 1701(e)."

(i) **PURPOSES.**—Section 10002 of the Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by striking "development" and inserting "use"; and

(2) in the matter following paragraph (4), by striking "for a period of 6 years".

(j) **COPS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 109(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3712h(b)) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (1);

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively; and

(C) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by inserting "except for the program under part Q of this title" before the period.

(2) **LAW ENFORCEMENT COMPUTER SYSTEMS.**—Section 107 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3712f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(C) **EXCEPTION.**—This section shall not apply to any grant made under part Q of this title."

SEC. 3. REPORT BY INSPECTOR GENERAL REQUIRED.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall submit to Congress a report on the Public Safety and Community Policing ("COPS ON THE BEAT") grant program authorized by part Q of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd et seq.), including the elements described in subsection (b).

(b) **ELEMENTS OF REPORT.**—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall include information on the following, with respect to the grant program described in such subsection:

(1) The effect of the program on the rate of violent crime, drug offenses, and other crimes.

(2) The degree to which State and local governments awarded a grant under the program contribute State and local funds, respectively, for law enforcement programs and activities.

(3) Any waste, fraud, or abuse within the program.

(c) **RANDOM SAMPLING REQUIRED.**—For purposes of subsection (a), the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall audit and review a random sampling of State and local law enforcement agencies. Such sampling shall include—

(1) law enforcement agencies of various sizes;

(2) law enforcement agencies that serve various populations; and

(3) law enforcement agencies that serve areas of various crime rates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join 102 cosponsors, including a dozen members of the House Judiciary Committee, in supporting this legislation.

During the 1990s, the crime rate for all categories of crime and in all parts of the United States fell dramatically. For example, homicide rates in 2001 plunged 43 percent from their peak in 1991, reaching their lowest level in 35 years.

Now, there are many potential explanations offered regarding the dramatic and unexpected drop in the rate of violent crime during the 1990s. One popular explanation is the Nation's sustained economic growth during the days of the Clinton administration.

But researchers often point to one other explanation: the creation of the

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in 1994, the COPS bill; and the subsequent infusion of more than \$7.6 billion in grants into State and local law enforcement communities to hire police officers and promote community policing as an effective strategy to prevent crime. The bill before us reinvigorates the COPS crime fighting program in several important respects.

First, it establishes hiring grants for community policing officers, anti-terror officers, and school resource officers. It also reauthorizes "Troops-to-COPS" grants to hire former members of the Armed Forces in particular as career law enforcement officers. And it also authorizes a "Community Prosecutors Program" to pay for community prosecuting programs, including those that assign prosecutors to handle cases from specific geographic areas or to address counter-terrorism and related problems.

Finally, it authorizes "Technology Grants" to State and local law enforcement agencies to help them refocus some of their activities from reacting to crime to preventing it. Crime prevention has now come back into vogue.

So this legislation, because of its long and successful prior experience, has been endorsed by key law enforcement groups: the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, and the National League of Cities.

I am proud to indicate their strong support for this measure, and I urge my colleagues to lend their support to a bill whose restoration is more than deserved.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, America's State and local law enforcement agencies are on the front lines combating and preventing crime every day. In the last decade, their dedication and service and innovative policing programs have led to a 34 percent decrease in violent crime.

It is unclear, however, whether the \$11 billion in COPS grants awarded since 1994 can receive the same credit. Studies have reached inconsistent findings as to the effectiveness of the COPS program in reducing the Nation's rising crime rates.

The COPS program awards grants to State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire or rehire police officers or procure new crime-fighting technology. It is intended to provide short-term Federal assistance to State and local law enforcement agencies. It is not intended to assume the funding of State and local police, a duty that lies first and foremost with the States.

The COPS program specifically directs that grant money not be used to supplant State or local funds but, rather, increase the amount of funds for

community policing. In reality, this has proven not to always be the case. Studies show that spending on the COPS program has not led to an increase in the overall spending by local law enforcement but often supplants State and local funds.

The actual number of officers put on the street under this program is also in dispute. Estimates vary from 118,000 to as few as 82,000 additional police officers. The answer to addressing crime in the 21st century is not simply more cops on the street. It is innovative programs, such as multi-jurisdictional task forces designed to target specific types of crimes and neighborhoods plagued by gangs and drugs.

We should look to cities like New York and Los Angeles, who continue to enjoy reduced violent crime rates thanks to smart, effective policing.

To put to rest once and for all conflicting findings about the effectiveness of the COPS program, the committee adopted an amendment directing the Inspector General of the Department of Justice to conduct an audit of the COPS program to review three areas: first, the effect of the program on the rate of violent crime; second, the degree to which COPS funding recipients contribute State or local funding to law enforcement programs and activities; and, third, any waste, fraud, or abuse within the COPS program.

As introduced, H.R. 1700 reduced the likelihood that community policing would, in fact, some day be funded by America's communities. The bill stripped several provisions from current law that encourage State and local governments to assume a larger share of COPS grants. This is directly contrary to the purpose of the COPS program and would only exacerbate the use of Federal funds to supplant State and local funds.

H.R. 1700 also stripped from current law limits on the duration of COPS grants and instead allowed unlimited grant renewal. This too is directly contrary to the original intent of the COPS program to provide short-term assistance to State, local, and tribal governments to hire additional police officers.

I am pleased that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle listened to our concerns and supported our changes to preserve the partnership between the Federal Government, State, local, and tribal governments. I thank Judiciary Committee Chairman CONYERS, Crime Subcommittee Chairman SCOTT, and Congressman WEINER for their cooperation.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Los Angeles, California, DIANE WATSON.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700,

the COPS Improvements Act of 2007. As a daughter of a police officer, I believe this bill is essential to keep our citizens safe and help communities combat crime.

Improving the COPS program is very important to the constituents I represent in California's 33rd Congressional District. If this bill passes, my district alone will get at least 25 new police officers, an additional school resource officer, along with more funding to be used for technology in Los Angeles' law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Speaker, today our children are killing one another in my district at an appalling rate. The Los Angeles Police Department recorded 7,714 gang crimes in 2006, a 14 percent jump over the previous year. I believe we need to take a comprehensive approach to combating gang violence and ensure that our youth have safe, quality schools that give them an alternative to the streets.

But there is one action we can take right now that will immediately reduce the level of violence and protect our kids, and that is to put more police on the streets.

We have the bill here today that does just that, the COPS Improvements Act, and I urge colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him and the folks on the other side of the aisle for their leadership in this area.

I rise in support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

The COPS grant program represents a true partnership between the Federal Government and State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to fight crime. This partnership has enabled more police officers to be hired and re-hired and facilitated the use of the most advanced crime-fighting technology to ensure that officers are effectively deployed into our communities all across the country.

As a result of our joint efforts, the number of violent offenses reported in our country is down from the more than 1.8 million reported back in 1994 to 1.3 million reported in 2005. But we cannot become complacent. We must ensure that State, local, and tribal law enforcement officials have the resources they need to keep law enforcement on the streets.

H.R. 1700 accomplishes this by increasing the funds available for the COPS program from \$1 billion to \$1.15 billion and by creating a number of new grant programs that will assist communities, such as community policing, crime prevention programs, and programs to address illegal drug manufacturing.

Most importantly, the bill we are considering today stays true to the COPS grant program's original purpose, that the Federal Government support State, local, and tribal law en-

forcement efforts, not supplant them, as the ranking member indicated. That would be the last thing that we should do. H.R. 1700, in its current form, requires that States, local, and tribal law enforcement demonstrate their commitment to the partnership by making a good-faith effort to match the funds provided by the Federal Government. Yet at the same time, the bill allows the Federal Government to play a primary role in those circumstances in which a grant recipient cannot meet their financial obligation for reasons beyond their control, thus ensuring that our communities remain safe and that crime does not prevail.

H.R. 1700 is an important and necessary tool for law enforcement, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to yield such time as he may consume to the author of this measure, Mr. WEINER of New York, whose confidence I have so much of this afternoon, notwithstanding that there are eight other speakers, because of his persevering commitment to re-instituting this community policing bill.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for both his confidence and his leadership of our committee, and I also want to thank BOBBY SCOTT, the chairman of the Crime Subcommittee.

We are really here for three reasons. We are here because the COPS program has been a singular success. It has been a success because we identified in the 1990s that crime was not a program that only localities could get a handle on, that we had a Federal role. It is a success because it was a singularly democratic, with a small "d," program.

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And small towns and big cities throughout all 50 States wound up benefiting from the over 118,000 police officers that were put on the street because of this program. We know, for example, that 82 percent of the grants went to cities with 50,000 people or less. And while cities like mine did very well because there were more police on the beat, we know that there were a large number of very small towns that benefited.

We know, as you can see, that the COPS program provides resources to all 50 States. This wasn't a political program. If you were a police department and you showed a way to get more cops on the street, the Federal Government wasn't going to sit back; they were going to be actively involved. And we know that it was successful. We know it because the Government Accountability Office looked at the connection between police officers and the reduction in crime and found a correlation. We know the University of Nebraska looked at a very similar thing and said, with all the varying elements that go into reducing crime, was the fact that there are over 110,000 new police officers on the street

funded by the COPS program a correlative effect? And the answer was yes.

We are also here for another reason. We are here because crime has started to creep back up. We are starting to see index crimes in cities around the country start to rise again. After years of decline, we are seeing it go up. And we are also here because there is even more law enforcement burden being put on localities and States than arguably any time in American history. Tom Ridge once famously said that homeland security starts in our hometown. And when we were talking about the cuts that were being made to homeland security, we were reminded that actually it is the localities that we are asking to do more and more of these things.

So we are here in acknowledgement that localities need the help. Localities now have to do more than they ever had to do before, and that's why in this program for the first time we are funding T-COPS, cops that are going to be hired to do antiterrorism work.

But particularly the reason that we're here is a third reason, that my colleagues on that side of the aisle eliminated the hiring component. President Bush eliminated the hiring component. This is a visual about how many police officers were hired under the COPS program from 1995 to 2005. This is what has happened under President Bush and under our Republican leadership. This many police officers. Zero. Zero. Zero in Virginia. Zero in South Dakota. Zero in California. The program was eliminated under my Republican friends. And as they stand up here today, and you're going to see them vote in large numbers for this program, they're going to wrap themselves around the idea that they support the COPS program when in fact overwhelmingly it was quite the opposite.

Let me show you the abandonment that's going on in the COPS program. This is the number of cops that were hired in 1998. Look at the decline. Look at how many were hired in 2005 and 2006. So the third reason we are here is we are taking up the gauntlet that was, frankly, laid down, put in a box and sealed away by my Republican friends. They said, you know what? Law enforcement is not a local job, it's a national job, we heard in committee. We heard, oh, the program hasn't worked the way it was intended. The fact of the matter is, had it not been for the Democrats taking over this body, had it not been for the chairmanship of Mr. CONYERS, this program would be zeroed out this year, too. You know how I know? Because we've had many years where those of us have stood up trying to change this where we were rebuffed again and again.

Now, I can't say all of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We've got many, including the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) who is an original sponsor of this. But it is stunning to me that anyone can stand up and

say that they support this program after supporting this.

In conclusion, I want to thank the chairman and my colleagues for passing this. We're going to ask for a recorded vote, and we're going to watch the large number of folks who helped write bills to zero out the COPS program suddenly embrace the idea that we have to put cops on the street. And I welcome my friends on the other side of the aisle to the cause of providing help for local law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today at long last.

Under new Democratic leadership, the Congress will take up my bill, H.R. 1700, to bring the COPS program back from the scrap heap, back from a point where the program's hiring component has been zeroed out, and restore it to be what it proved to be during the Clinton administration: one of the most successful law enforcement programs in the history of the United States.

We are facing a rise in crime in the United States. In a survey of cities large and small, released last month, the Police Executive Research Board found that 71 percent of cities had seen an increase in homicides, 80 percent had seen an increase in robberies, and 67 percent had seen an increase in assaults with guns. Moreover the FBI recently reported that nationwide figures showed that last year, homicides, assaults and other violent offenses grew by 4 percent, and robberies, which are often interpreted as a precursor to more serious crime, jumped by 10 percent.

Democrats faced a similar challenge in 1993 when asked about the rise in drug-fueled street crime.

Then, Democrats, led by Bill Clinton, answered with the most far reaching and innovative Federal anti-crime initiative ever—the COPS program. It did the most intuitive thing—it hired more than 100,000 beat cops. It worked. It put police in every neighborhood, town and city. Sure, big cities like Chicago and L.A. hired officers with Federal help. But so did small towns like Marengo, IL, and Plano, TX.

Now, as crime rises and we work to combat the new challenges our country faces in the wake of 9/11 the COPS program is again the solution.

The background is this. The COPS program works. A study by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office recently stated, "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in rates of total index crimes, violent crimes, and property crime." According to the study, between 1998 and 2000, COPS hiring grants were responsible for reducing crimes by about 200,000 to 225,000 crimes—one third of which were violent. Studies done by the Brookings Institution, the University of Nebraska, Yale and Georgetown Universities, the University of Maryland, and the Urban Institute—among others—found similarly that COPS works.

When John Ashcroft spoke about this during his confirmation hearings for Attorney General, he said, "Let me just say, I think the COPS program has been successful. The purpose of the COPS program was to demonstrate to local police departments that if you put additional police, feet on the street, that crime would be affected and people would be safer and more secure. We believe the COPS program demonstrated that conclusively." That is John Ashcroft.

When Tom Ridge was sworn in as the Secretary of Homeland Security, he said homeland security starts in our home towns.

Over the course of the last 5 years, local law enforcement has become deeply involved in homeland security. Big cities have been forced to upgrade not only their equipment and training but also the type of personnel they hire. Some cities have hired officers exclusively to focus on homeland security—police who work to gather intelligence, analyze terror threats, and monitor our most vulnerable targets.

And how have Republicans in Washington responded since coming to office? They have eliminated the program police departments big and small had grown to depend on: COPS. Funded at over \$1 billion a year at the end of the Clinton administration, President Bush has zeroed out the hiring component of what some believe to have been the most successful law enforcement program in the Nation's history.

The bill we are considering today would restore the COPS program and update to the challenges local law enforcement agencies face in the post 9/11 world.

This bill breathes new life into the COPS program by authorizing \$600 million per year for hiring grants, which could fund up to 50,000 new cops on the beat over the next 6 years. And in an effort to make sure that police departments around the country can use this funding as they need—as terrorism becomes a greater burden on their limited budgets—this bill explicitly enables COPS to provide funding for officers who perform "intelligence, anti-terror, or homeland security duties."

The bill also authorizes \$350 million per year for COPS technology grants. These grants will allow police agencies to purchase things like laptop computers for patrol cars, crime mapping software, and interoperable communications equipment.

And the bill explicitly enables COPS to use funding for "Troops to Cops" programs that help returning veterans find employment as law enforcement officers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. CONYERS, the chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, Mr. SCOTT, and the Democratic leadership for bring this bill expeditiously to the floor for passage.

I also want to thank Joshua Fay-Hurvitz, Bobby Vassar, Greg Barnes, Mike Volkov, Caroline Lynch, Karas Pattison, Molly Lothamer, and other members of the Democratic, Republican, and Legislative Counsel staffs who have worked so hard to make this day possible.

I urge passage of the COPS Improvement Act.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Over and over again we hear on the floor, we hear outside this body the importance of coming together in a bipartisan manner and what we can do to resolve issues for the American people. The unfortunate thing is when we try to do that, as we have done in this bill and we bring this bill in a bipartisan manner, sometimes my friends on the other side of the aisle simply can't take yes for an answer. And when we hear presentations like we just have, Mr. Speaker, I feel it is incumbent

upon me to stand up and just correct some of those facts.

The first thing is that the COPS program has been authorized in the 2005 Department of Justice authorization bill through 2009 for \$1.047 billion. All this authorization will do is increase that to \$1.15 billion through 2013.

In addition, when you see these lines that drop off with the number of cops that are being hired, one of the things that we have heard from the testimony that we've had is twofold. One of the reasons that we had declines in the crime rate was not just because of the numbers of police officers, but more importantly, not just because we sent money, but because throughout the 1990s we had a lot of policies from Republican legislators across the States that did things like abolish parole, that did things like mandatory sentences, that did things like truth-in-sentencing that took criminals off the streets and out of our communities. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out if we do that, we reduce violent crime.

The other thing that we heard testimony on is that in New Orleans, when we went to do hearings there, the number of police officers increased and the crime increased. And in New York, the number of police officers decreased and the crime decreased. By the rationale we just heard, one would argue we should have less police officers.

But the testimony was, Mr. Speaker, we do need police officers on the streets. That's why we brought this bill in a bipartisan manner. But it is important that we have smart policing, that we have comprehensive programs. Because if we just dump money at the problem and we don't do that, we're not going to solve the problems that are before us.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately there were members from the Judiciary Committee that worked in a bipartisan manner to bring this bill to the floor. I hope we will pass it.

Mr. CONYERS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FORBES. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. CONYERS. I would like to play good cop in this because I want to commend those Republicans who are going to vote for this measure for joining us. Look, it doesn't matter when you come on board. It's that your thoughtfulness in helping us craft a bipartisan bill was exceedingly important, and I personally am indebted to you for that.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, we certainly thank you for your cooperativeness and support in reaching what we think is a much better bill by the time that it reached the floor than when it started.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be the lead Republican original cosponsor of

this legislation which will reauthorize the COPS program and put 50,000 more cops on our streets.

The COPS program is responsible for putting nearly 120,000 cops on the streets nationwide, including 774 cops in central Florida.

Violent crime is on the rise, and we need this legislation now more than ever. For example, in my hometown of Orlando, Florida, the murder rate is up 122 percent. I recently met with all of central Florida's chiefs of police and sheriffs, and 100 percent of them support the COPS program. This legislation is also endorsed by the National Sheriffs Association and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Is the COPS program successful? Absolutely. Former Attorney General John Ashcroft described the COPS program as a "miraculous sort of success." A 2005 GAO study concluded that the COPS program successfully played a role in the decline in violent crime in the 1990s. And more than 95 percent of law enforcement officers hired by a COPS grant are still on the street today.

Now, some might say that putting cops on the street is not a priority worth funding with Federal dollars. Well, I would rather put cops on the street than build bridges to nowhere or give subsidies to spinach growers. Let's be practical. There are children in Orlando, Florida, growing up in neighborhoods where 49 people were killed last year. Those kids want to be able to walk home from school safely and play in their neighborhoods without fear. These kids don't care if the cops' salary is paid for with purely local funds or a mixture of local and Federal funds. They just want to feel safe.

This legislation is a step in the right direction. I want to thank the cosponsor of this legislation, Congressman ANTHONY WEINER, for his leadership and strong support of the COPS program. He and I worked together earlier to get \$70 million added in the supplemental.

Some have said that some Republicans are new to this. I can assure you that I've been an original cosponsor of this bill ever since I got here to Congress. If I can quote L.L. Cool Jay, the rapper: "Don't call it a comeback; I've been here for years."

This COPS legislation was approved by the Judiciary Committee by a full voice vote and is worthy of our bipartisan support. I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1700.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON has supported this bill from its inception, and so I recognize the gentlelady from Dallas, Texas, for 1 minute.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman of the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

As violent crime continues to rise, we must address the needs of our Na-

tion's law enforcement professionals. Law enforcement presence remains one of the greatest assets against crime. I have witnessed firsthand the importance of this program where our community cops simply work with our young people, help to break up gangs, helping them with tutoring in the evening when they are on duty in those communities. So in addition to this bill just allowing the 50,000 cops to be hired, it also allows for the increase in funding to improve technology for our police agencies. And it may be used to update police stations and cars for providing the latest technology in crime fighting.

I am delighted to see that it is being considered, and I strongly support and recommend the approval.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

(Mr. LATOURETTE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the COPS Improvements Act of 2007. I want to congratulate Chairman CONYERS, Mr. WEINER and Mr. KELLER for bringing this bill forward.

My written statement talks all about the importance of adding a police officer school, resources officers and things of that nature. I want to talk about an aspect of the bill that I am particularly excited about, and that is the technology grants contained in the bill.

The police departments in my district were recently notified that the backbone radio system that we basically spent millions of dollars on a number of years ago is now going to become obsolete in 2011 because the manufacturer is no longer going to make the spare parts. In the small communities that I represent, it means a bill of \$10 million. The technology upgrades in this particular piece of legislation are going to give my communities the opportunity to bid for grants that hopefully will replace that radio system and make our community safer.

Secondly, in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings, I have heard from most of the school districts in my district that we need to build on the success of the last COPS bill where 225 school resource officers were added to the schools in the State of Ohio. And they are excited again about the opportunity to add new school resource officers in the schools to make them safer for all of the students in our school system and across the country.

So again I want to congratulate the sponsors of this legislation. And I thank Mr. FORBES for yielding.

I rise today to speak in support of the COPS Improvement Act of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, when I meet with law enforcement officials across my district, their biggest concern is that Washington keeps asking them to do more with less, especially in the aftermath of 9-11. Each year, they beg me to adequately fund the COPS program and to reinstate the hiring portion.

In my State of Ohio, the COPS program has been a godsend:

It has funded nearly 3,800 additional cops and deputies.

It has infused about 640 departments across Ohio with more than \$227 million in Federal help.

More than 225 school resource officers have been added to Ohio.

More than \$55 million has gone to Ohio departments to improve crime-fighting technologies.

In my district alone, in the Akron-Cleveland area, nearly \$20 million has gone to local departments and 285 officers have been added to streets and schools in my district.

I met with about 50 police chiefs throughout my district early last month to tout this bill, and share the news that it was coming. They are thrilled with this legislation. Many departments in my district were able to add officers thanks to the COPS program, and they have kept them on their payrolls.

They have patiently waited for us to beef up the COPS program, especially as violent crime experiences an uptick. They want and need the Federal Government to help fund cops on the beat, new cops in schools, and they are thrilled that \$350 million will be available for competitive grants to pay for laptop computers, radios, cameras, and all the technological marvels our police departments must have and can barely afford.

My police chiefs in Lake County recently found out that they have to replace their entire radio system because the manufacturer will no longer be able to repair or replace them.

My chiefs are thrilled that this bill recognizes the importance of school officers. They spoke of the need to keep schools safe, and the bond that develops with students so students can feel safe to confide in them. These school officers serve as mentors, friends and protectors—they are worth their weight in gold. It's a small investment to make.

In the days following the shootings at Virginia Tech, I heard from many school districts pleading that funding be made available for school resource officers. This bill will allow law enforcement to partner with the schools. I also heard from the Ohio School Resource Officers Association in the aftermath of Virginia Tech. They say passage of the COPS Improvement Act can't happen fast enough. The Senate passed it in March, and I am proud that the House will today.

This is great legislation. It's a good value for taxpayers. We ask our police to protect our homes, our businesses and our schools and for too long we've asked them to do it on the cheap.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the chairman from Illinois, RAHM EMANUEL.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, in 1994, when we passed the Community Policing Program that added 100,000 community police onto America's streets and also followed through with the strategy of not only getting cops on the beat, but getting gangs, guns and drugs off the street, we saw the longest and largest decline of violent crime in America's history.

After that program's success of adding 120,000 community police officers to the streets across this country, when it

was ended in 2002 we saw violent crime in America begin to inch up again. Community police officers walking the beat, knowing the neighborhood and knowing their community is the linchpin of a successful anti-crime strategy.

□ 1215

I am so proud that we have a bill here representing, again, going back to a very basic approach of community policing by putting more cops on the beat, which is the success to reducing violent crime in America. We saw that rise again because this COPS Program ended. Every sheriff, police chief and mayor has asked for this program to be renewed, and I am proud we have done that to successfully once again get back to helping our communities reduce crime. In Chicago, we added 1,800 cops and we saw crime reduced in our neighborhood.

I thank the chairman from Michigan and also the gentleman from New York for their leadership in getting this bill passed.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, to both sides, thanks for coming together on this critical bill. Anthony, you have done a good job, and the chairman as well.

There is nothing like the presence of a police officer. It is not only a deterrent to crime, but it is at the very heart of homeland security. That is why the British are way ahead of us. They have a bottom-up philosophy of looking at what is going wrong in the community. We cannot have a top-down.

So 117,000 police officers later, to our rear right now is going the National Peace Officers Memorial Service, and we know who is there. But we know who is here. This is critical. We pray for these police officers on the streets every day. I agree with the gentleman from Ohio, the technology is just as significant as the number of personnel we put on the street.

This administration tried to cut the FIRE Program, and they tried desperately to cut the COPS Program. It is a new day, and we started it in the sunshine.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I appreciate his leadership on this.

I would rise, Mr. Speaker, to say that all of us obviously support police officers on the street. But there are some legitimate concerns about this bill and others that are brought to the floor. One that I would point out on this bill is that we attempt to find some objective information about the programs that we put in place here at the Federal level.

The Office of Management and Budget has a program called Program Assessment Rating Tool which attempts to determine the effectiveness of what we do here on the floor, and their grade for this COPS Program is "Not performing, results not demonstrated" in the latest review.

That is not to say that we don't support cops on the street, police on the street, but it is important to appreciate that there are some legitimate concerns about the program.

Another concern I have is that one of our House rules, XIII section 3(d)(1) says that all committee reports must contain a statement citing the specific powers granted to the Congress in the Constitution to enact the law proposed by the bill or joint resolution. In fact, in this bill being brought to the floor, there is no such statement available from the committee.

So I think there are legitimate concerns, Mr. Speaker, and I ask my colleagues to review those.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1700 and the law enforcement officers that keep our neighborhoods and communities safe.

The small cities of Connecticut's Fifth District may not rival the size of those neighboring districts, but they still have the same need for vigorous community-based law enforcement. Since the COPS Program began in 1994, 265 police officers have been put on the beat in the Fifth District. This bill could put an additional 113 police officers out on the streets. One bill, this bill, could increase the law enforcement personnel by the COPS Program by 50 percent.

For the last 6 years as I sat in the Connecticut State legislature, I have watched the Federal Government walk away from its commitment to partner with States and towns to provide funding necessary to keep our communities safe. In Connecticut, our law enforcement community has been asked to do more with less. They are the pride of our community, but they have seen the cuts in action that have been imposed by this Congress.

The numbers in this bill are meaningful, Mr. Speaker. I urge all Members to support the bill. It is important for our law enforcement officers and important for the safety of our communities.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, once again I want to emphasize my support of this legislation and my support of additional police officers, but it is important that we continue to make sure we are separating the facts from some statements that are being made.

Testimony that we have received before the committee strikes a great contrast between different areas in our

country. Sending money alone, even putting cops on the streets alone, will not solve our crime problem. As we mentioned earlier, in New Orleans we had testimony that only 7 percent of the individuals arrested, and this is pre-Katrina, only 7 percent of the individuals arrested ever end up in jail, and the police officers themselves, the police chief, testified how demoralizing that was to crime fighting and police officers there.

That is why a comprehensive approach, looking at more police officers, but also such things as abolishing parole, mandatory sentencing and three-strikes legislation work to help cut down on the crime that we have.

We have also heard testimony from both sides of the aisle about the importance of technology. Many police departments are recognizing across the country that it is not just the quantity of police officers, but it is how they use them. New York came in and testified that what they have done is actually decreased the number of police officers they have, but they have used technology to do it in a smarter way, which has reduced overall crime.

Mr. Speaker, we support this legislation, but let's make sure we are not using the hyperbole, that we are using the facts. It is important to have police. It is important to have them used in a smart, effective and comprehensive manner if we are going to deal with the crime that our communities are so concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN). The gentleman from Michigan has 5¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Virginia has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield one-quarter of a minute to the author of the bill, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER).

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify some of the mistakes made by the previous speaker, at least the misimpressions left.

One, technology grants cut under the previous Republican Congress; two, alternatives to incarceration cut under the previous Republican administration; three, police officers, I have already talked about, cut.

Just about all of the elements of a comprehensive package were eliminated under the leadership of your party. So if you care about reducing crime, this is a better day than it was a year ago.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise in support of this bill. It is the bill that I heard most about when I campaigned.

Crime is the number one issue in Memphis, Tennessee, and I think it is the number one issue in most areas in

this country. I spoke with the Afro-American Police Association, and the issue they raised to me was the COPS Program, that community policing works.

I spoke with people in the district and they knew that the COPS Program had been successful, that it worked with community policing, and they knew it had been cut by this Congress and they couldn't understand why, and I couldn't tell them. I told them I was going to come to Congress and do what I could to see that the COPS program was reimplemented, that it was funded in a proper fashion, and that it helped cut crime.

In this bill we have an opportunity to work together to bring our troops home and to support our troops because veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq will be given priorities when feasible to get these positions, to come back and render their abilities and their experience for our people rather than the people of Baghdad.

Support our troops, support the COPS Program and make our streets safer.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Oakland, California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. I want to thank the gentleman for his stellar leadership as Chair of the Judiciary Committee, and thank my colleague, Congressman WEINER from New York, for your determination to make our country safer by the introduction of this bill.

The reauthorization of the COPS Program really does come at a very important time in our entire country. As an example, COPS has provided since 1994 in my district alone \$45.5 million in grants. These funds have allowed law enforcement agencies in my district to hire 552 additional police officers and 45 new school resource officers. COPS has also provided technology grants totaling \$2.9 million in my district.

If passed, this bill will allow COPS to hire more necessary officers. The people of Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville, the entire Ninth Congressional District, could see 236 new officers, \$13 million in grants, 19 school resource officers and \$2.8 million in technology funding over the next 6 years.

Our communities throughout the country need the COPS Program. This is about public safety and violence prevention. Community policing does work.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened here today is very important in terms of developing a justice system that will operate at a very fundamental and basic level, the police level. It doesn't correct the lack of prosecution that has been raised by the gentleman from Vir-

ginia. It doesn't correct many parts of the justice system that we on the committee plan to go into. But I think there is a unanimity on both sides of the aisle for restoring a very important community program that has justified itself, and it is in that spirit that I want to commend everyone on both sides of the aisle for their important work that they have done in beginning to restore the program.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the author of the bill, the gentleman from New York, ANTHONY WEINER, whose perseverance has led us to the floor here today.

Mr. WEINER. And I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the many reasons that the American people have turned the Congress over to Democrats is that we have said, like so many Americans, that we don't want to hear just more talk and rhetoric and posturing; that we want to start to actively solve the problems that people face in communities around this country. And whether it be a sheriff's department of two or three officers, or the NYPD which has some 36,000 officers, after today's vote and after it gets passed in the other body, God willing, and signed by the President, we are going to start to do what we need to do to improve homeland security, to reduce drug crime, to reduce the amount of the day-to-day challenges that people face; to hire more officers to go into schools, to get technology so officers can be out on the beat and doing it more.

This is a program that, frankly, never should have died. It is a program that I think too many of my friends on the other side just got blood in their eyes over the idea that it was offered under President Clinton, passed under President Clinton and single-handedly brought down crime during those years. That is not a good enough reason. Let us get past that kind of political haze and just realize that sometimes things are successful, even though they are the ideas of someone else.

John Ashcroft dissented on several occasions. He said, "I think the COPS Program has been successful." Alberto Gonzales, someone whom I am not prone to quote very often, has said, "The COPS Program has been beneficial." The Oneida County Executive, the former Mayor of Rome, says, "This program has made a difference," a tiny city. John Ashcroft said when testifying before the House of Representatives, "It has been one of the most successful programs we have ever worked with."

This is a bipartisan success, because every once in a while around here we get it right. We design a program with a goal in mind, and in this case it was to get the Federal Government off the sidelines.

There are many in this body who hold this kind of old-fashioned federalist notion that, you know what,

protecting citizenry is something that only localities do. Well, we realize now in the post-9/11 world that has changed.

We are doing something about it, and I commend my colleagues of all stripes for finally joining that bandwagon.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, as I rise to close, I just want to say that I don't think the American people much care whether it is Republicans in charge or Democrats in charge. I think what they really care about is whether or not we are reaching across and trying to forge solutions to the problems they face. That is why I want to compliment the chairman for his bipartisan manner in which he has not only handled working on this bill, but has handled this debate on the floor today.

□ 1230

Mr. Speaker, this bill was never put on the sidelines. As I have mentioned before, the facts show in 2005 we reauthorized it through 2009 for \$1.047 billion.

The key was the DOJ Office of the Inspector General and GAO reports note that thousands of hires funded by COPS never materialized as law enforcement agencies used COPS funding to cover their own budget shortfalls. In fact, they showed that \$277 million were misspent funds.

Mr. Speaker, by working together in a bipartisan manner, I think we have crafted a bill that will help in a comprehensive manner continue to put police officers on the streets and continue to allow our local and State enforcement agencies to be able to use technology and smart policing to do what they want us to do, and that is to reach out to form practical solutions of how they deal with crime and the crime that is plaguing their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce my support for the COPS Improvements Act of 2007. Although the COPS Act was originally introduced in 1994, its reauthorization is a clear indication of this Congress' dedication to passing legislation with the intent of securing our streets and providing for first responders, all of whom are vital to securing our Nation. The COPS Improvements Act is a post-9/11 legislation implementing a homeland security policy, specifically in the areas of terrorism preparedness, intelligence gathering, interoperability and other concerns we have in our communities across America.

The Committee on Homeland Security supports the COPS Improvements Act authorizing \$600 million per year to hire officers to engage in their communities across a variety of policing duties, including counter-terrorism. The Amtrak Police Department, whose officers are on the frontlines of transportation security, will be given the resources to hire and train officers to perform intelligence, anti-terror, and other homeland security duties protecting our railroads.

The COPS Improvements Act is also applauded by the Committee on Homeland Security for authorizing \$350 million per year for COPS technology grants. Among the grants

established, many were dedicated to the development of interoperable communication technologies. The improvement of interoperable communications is vital to homeland security. It ensures there is communications connectivity between and among civilian authorities, local first responders, and the National Guard in the wake of a national emergency. This is a vital lesson we have painfully learned in the aftermath of emergency responders facing a lack of centralized coordination during a terrorist attack such as 9/11.

The reauthorization of the COPS legislation is important to the protection of our citizens and from domestic and foreign threats. I, and the Committee on Homeland Security, promote the COPS Improvements Act of 2007 as it is legislation that assists in protecting all Americans. But, I want to be clear—the Committee on Homeland Security should work with my colleagues in other committees to ensure these grants are used for their intended purpose and do not somehow exceed their legislative bounds. I look forward to discussing this issue further with Chairman CONYERS and others. Terrorism is an issue we at the Committee take very seriously and believe the COPS Improvements Act can serve a vital role in reducing and responding to a possible terrorist event.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation commemorates National Police Week this week and the 26th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day today (May 15), let us honor the memory of those who have fallen in the line of duty and thank those who carry on their legacy, serving in communities across this Nation, keeping the peace, and protecting the American people.

It is altogether fitting that today—with thousands of peace officers in Washington to commemorate these events—the Members of this House will consider this very important bipartisan legislation, the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, when we pass this bill, the new Democratic Majority in this House will again demonstrate its absolute commitment to taking decisive action that protects our communities and combats crime.

In short, this legislation reauthorizes the highly successful Community Oriented Policing Services Program, or COPS, which was enacted in 1994 under the Clinton Administration and which helped local law enforcement agencies hire 117,000 additional officers between 1995 and 2005—including 908 officers in Maryland's Fifth Congressional District.

In fact, the COPS hiring program—with its emphasis on getting more cops on the beat—is credited with reducing the crime rate.

The nonpartisan General Accountability Office, for example, concluded in one study (and I quote): "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in rates of total index crimes, violent crimes and property crime."

Unfortunately, however, the former House Majority sharply reduced the funding for the universal hiring program under COPS in recent years—from more than \$1 billion a year in the late 1990s, to \$10 million in 2005, to the complete elimination of hiring grants in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, let's put these figures in perspective. One billion dollars a years for COPS hiring grants is not an insubstantial sum. But today, in Iraq, our Nation is spending approximately \$10 billion a month—or \$2.5 billion a week.

House Democrats believe it is imperative to reinvigorate the successful COPS program. And thus, this legislation calls for putting 50,000 additional police officers on the streets over the next 6 years by authorizing \$600 million a year for COPS hiring grants.

Furthermore, this bill authorizes \$350 million a year for COPS technology grants, and \$200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

Mr. Speaker, today, through this bipartisan legislation, this House will demonstrate that it is committed to protecting and strengthening America's communities.

We will demonstrate that the Federal Government is a committed partner in protecting Americans not only from the threat posed by international terrorism, but also from the dangers posed by domestic crime.

I urge my colleagues: Support the COPS Improvements Act.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, today, the House of Representatives is doing the right thing for our Nation's police and first responders by passing the COPS Improvements Act. This bill will improve the safety of communities across our Nation, and will help to reverse the damaging budget cuts that our first responders have suffered in the past 7 years.

In 1994, President Clinton's COPS program changed the way law enforcement in this country operates, by giving local departments the resources to fight crime and put 100,000 new law enforcement officers on the streets. The COPS program helped transform our major cities, and gave rural police and sheriffs the resources needed to fight the growing problems of drugs and violence.

As a former law enforcement officer, I know how important the COPS program has been to local communities. Its federal-to-local structure puts resources where they are needed: cops on the front lines.

As co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, I work with law enforcement professionals from around the country, and they are unanimous in their verdict: COPS is a program that works.

Unfortunately, the current administration disagrees with the approach that was so successful in reducing crime during the Clinton years. The administration has repeatedly attempted to cut and gut the program, in spite of repeated endorsements from every major law enforcement organization and the proven success of COPS in reducing crime. Under the Republican Congress, COPS funding was reduced from its Clinton-era high of \$1.42 billion to less than \$500 million in 2006, a cut of two-thirds.

These cuts had a severe impact on local departments in my district and in districts around the country. Attempts to keep officers on the street, protect our schools, fight drugs and improve our homeland security were all undermined. Republicans in Congress and the Bush administration have been full of rhetoric about the heroism of local first responders and the importance of fighting terrorism, but the budget numbers tell a different story: for the Republican Congress, local cops simply were not a priority.

Now we have a chance to set things right. The law enforcement community has a tremendous need for this legislation to be enacted and fully funded. Experts have said that it may cost as much as \$18 billion to fully upgrade our first responders to interoperable

communications; this bill will provide money for technology grants to help close that gap. News reports show that the violent crime rate has begun to rise again in our cities; this bill will help local departments deploy more officers to fight violence and make our streets safe.

The COPS Improvements Act represents our commitment to listen to our local police departments and give them the resources they need to do their job. I am proud to support this bill, and I urge the President to sign it into law, so that our law enforcement officers can again receive the support and assistance they deserve to keep us and America safe.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act. The COPS hiring program has been an unqualified success. Since the program first began in 1994, we have seen crime rates plummet throughout the country.

There are many factors one can point to for this drop in crime, but the most obvious one is that the COPS hiring program has given our local governments over \$9 billion to hire over 117,000 police officers.

Law enforcement agencies in my district, New York's 17th, have received \$625,984,137 in COPS grants since 1994. This funding has translated into 6,997 additional law enforcement officers in my district. Unfortunately, Republicans ended the COPS hiring program last year. A likely result of this, is that crime rates are inching upward.

It is essential that we stay vigilant in our fight against crime by passing the COPS Improvement Act. When this bill passes, law enforcement agencies across the country will be able to add over 50,000 police officers to our streets. In my district, we will gain \$190,978,211 in funding and 2,991 more police officers.

But the COPS program is not just about the number of police officers; it is also about giving police officers the tools they need. Since 1994, \$26,678,080 in COPS grants have been awarded to law enforcement agencies in the 17th District of New York to purchase technology that enables agencies to put more officers on the beat. This translates into more bulletproof vests and mobile computers.

If the COPS Improvement Act of 2007 passes into law, an additional \$8,139,075 in technology grants will likely flow to the 17th District of New York.

Mr. Speaker, I join the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities in urging my colleagues to pass the COPS Improvement Act of 2007.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus and proud cosponsor of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act, I rise to urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Since its creation in the 1994 Crime Bill, the COPS program has been a key component of the Federal effort to keep our communities safe. The program has been widely hailed as a success. It has supported the hiring of over 100,000 officers and contributed to a nationwide decrease in violent crime in the 1990s.

H.R. 1700 makes several improvements to the program to increase public safety across

the country. It reauthorizes the COPS hiring program to help put 50,000 new police on the beat in our communities, provides \$350 million a year for State and local agencies to develop new technologies for crime prevention and police training and provides \$200 million a year for community-based prosecution programs.

In my home state of Minnesota, I've seen, firsthand, the importance of the COPS program to local police in reducing crime and improving public safety.

The COPS program has been an invaluable resource to state and local law enforcement agencies for hiring, technology and school safety grants, and has been critical to providing personnel, equipment, training and technical assistance in the war on drugs and homeland security.

We must never forget our cops are on the front lines—in the war on crime, fighting drug dealers and protecting our homeland.

As Chris Matthews of MSNBC said after the attacks of September 11: "Before the attacks on our homeland, America's heroes were the rich and famous. Since Sept. 11, America's heroes are the cops and firefighters. And that's good for America."

Today, America's heroes are counting on us. Congress owes it to these brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day they put on the badge. Our nation's law enforcement officers need all the tools Congress can provide. It's time to honor the sacrifices made by our Nation's law enforcement community and give our Nation's finest the support they need.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as a proud co-sponsor I rise in strong support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act of 2007, introduced by my colleague Mr. WEINER. This act would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, expanding the ability of the Attorney General to make grants for the COPS ON THE BEAT program. This important program provides for public safety and community policing activities, and it very simply puts more cops on the streets.

This legislation would bring much needed relief to our brave and overworked law enforcement officers, who are on the front line of the war against crime. At a minimum, the passage of this legislation would bring 374 additional police officers to reinforce the streets of the 18th congressional district of Texas, which I proudly represent. These 374 cops would be supported by a much needed funding increase of \$17,346,456, as well as an additional \$2,753,784 in technology grants to law enforcement agencies in my district. The 18th congressional district is only one of hundreds of communities across the nation that will enjoy greater security, safety, and stability as a result of this important legislation.

During the 1990s, the crime rates for all categories of crime in the United States fell dramatically and almost continuously, with homicide rates plunging 43 percent to reach their lowest level in 35 years in 2001. Unfortunately, after this sustained drop across all geographic areas and population groups, crime rates have once again begun to rise. In particular, 2005 marked the greatest increase in violent crime in 14 years. This increase in crime, not coincidentally, corresponds with cuts to the funding of the COPS program by the GOP-led Congress.

This is not acceptable. As part of the New Direction for America ushered in by this Democratic Congress, we are committed to ensuring that Americans can enjoy real security within our Nation's borders. We are committed to guaranteeing that our country's communities, like my own 18th district, have police forces that are adequately staffed, equipped, and funded. We are committed to reinvigorating programs, like COPS, that have proven highly successful in the past.

Mr. Speaker, an increase in crime mandates an increase in the number of police. Since 1995, the COPS office has awarded over \$11.4 billion to over 13,000 state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. These funds allow agencies to hire and train law enforcement officers to participate in community policing, to purchase and deploy new crime-fighting technologies, and to develop and test new and innovative policing strategies.

Despite the demonstrated success of the COPS program in reducing crime rates, the current administration has targeted its funding. This would jeopardize the marked headway this program has made into creating and maintaining safe communities nationwide. H.R. 1700 provides an opportunity to reverse this harmful process, and, as a result, enjoys the support of numerous law enforcement organizations, including Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations and the National Sheriffs' Association.

This bill allows us to build upon a program that has already proven successful by expanding the mission and increasing the prospects for grants under the COPS program. It allows us to both protect America's communities from increasing violent crime, and to provide adequate resources for those whom we entrust with guarding our safety.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation because I believe the work of our State, local, and tribal law enforcement officials to be crucial to the security of our communities and our Nation. I believe that the program's record is clear, and the evidence shows that more cops equals less crime. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in support this legislation.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act of 2007. I would like to thank the chief sponsors of this legislation, Congressmen WEINER and KELLER, for their efforts in bringing this bipartisan bill to the floor today.

Congress created the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-322). Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, the COPS program awards grants to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing personnel, implement new technologies to combat crime, and develop new policing techniques.

Since its establishment, the COPS program has been widely hailed as a success. It most notably has supported the hiring of over 120,000 additional police officers and helped contribute to a nationwide decrease in the rate of violent crime. In Hawaii alone, COPS grants have helped to hire 522 additional police officers and sheriffs and placed 18 new resource

officers in primary and secondary schools throughout the islands.

Yet funding for this successful program has become a yearly Congressional battle. President Bush's latest FY 2008 budget request seeks to cut funding for the COPS program by 50 percent, which is actually an improvement from previous years in which program funding was simply zeroed out.

In justifying the COPS program funding cut, the administration has often cited the need to refocus our energies on homeland security issues. However, our State and local law enforcement agencies play an increasingly significant role in homeland security through their already established roles in local crime prevention and investigation. It is not unreasonable to suggest that State and local law enforcement entities are among our first lines of defense in keeping our homeland secure. To that end, it is the responsibility of this Congress to continue to support and strengthen the COPS program.

H.R. 1700 is an affirmative step in this direction, as it would authorize \$1.15 billion each year in years 2008 through 2013 for the COPS program. This is a 10 percent or \$103 million increase from the amounts authorized in current law. Of that amount, \$600 million would be allocated each year for the hiring of additional law enforcement officers. It is estimated that this amount will translate into at least 50,000 new police officers on our streets. H.R. 1700 would also allow for up to \$350 million annually for grant programs that improve crime-fighting technologies and up to \$200 million each year to assist district attorneys in hiring prosecutors.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1700, as it supports the work of law enforcement officers across our Nation. I would also like to extend a heartfelt mahalo (thank you) to our State and local law enforcement officers who serve our Nation with distinction and aloha.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700, COPS Improvement Act of 2007. Since 1994 the COPS program has allowed local law enforcement agencies to hire an additional 117,000 officers. It is unconscionable that over the past several years, the Republican-led Congress has repeatedly cut the COPS program and eventually eliminated all funding in the 2006 budget.

I'm proud that my district has benefited significantly from the COPS program. In fact, in 1996 President Clinton came to the City of Salinas, CA, to commend Mayor Caballero and Salinas law enforcement officials on a successful community policing program. In addition, Salinas was awarded one of a handful of COPS grants for tracking weapons. These tools enabled the City of Salinas to reduce gang violence. As funding for the COPS program dried up, gang violence in Salinas spiked and in 2005 there were 24 homicides. This time, on its own dime, the City of Salinas and the County of Monterey have busted their budgets to implement a community policing gang task force. Reauthorization of the COPS program, with full funding, will enable Salinas and other communities all across the country to again implement effective community policing programs to combat crime.

Reauthorization of the COPS program should not be a partisan issue. After all, all crime is local. Community policing is effective because it addresses crime at the local level.

H.R. 1700 will allow for the hiring of up to 50,000 new cops on the beat over the next 6 years. In addition, the bill authorizes \$600 million a year for COPS hiring grants, \$350 million a year for COPS technology grants, and \$200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 1700.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, later today we will consider reauthorizing the COPS program for another 6 years. It is fitting that the House will take up this bill during National Police Week. I hope our law enforcement community regards this bill and this week as recognition of our thanks for keeping us safe and protected. We appreciate their work and sacrifices immensely. Reauthorizing the COPS program is very important to our State and local law enforcement, as the program provides grants directly to them. My district has received nearly \$11 million in COPS grants over the past decade and a half, and it is extremely important that this program continues. This money has helped and will help keep Hoosiers in the Ninth District safe by ensuring a greater law enforcement presence on our streets back home and combating violent crime such as meth trafficking and usage. I fully support reauthorizing COPS and thank our law enforcement for all the sacrifices they make day in and day out.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I am deeply disappointed that the Democratic leadership has chosen to bring up H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvement Act of 2007, under suspension. While the Committee on Judiciary reported the bill out without objection, I am concerned that the hundreds of Members not on the committee will not have any opportunity to offer any improvements to the bill.

Had I been allowed the opportunity, I would have introduced an amendment to more fairly allot grants by State. According to last year's funding statistics, small States received a disproportionate amount of funds. In fact, in some cases small States have received more funds than States more than five times their population. For instance, Alabama gets more assistance than California.

My home State, New Jersey, a densely populated State nestled between the major metropolitan centers of New York City and Philadelphia and also home to a heavily trafficked drug corridor and its own inner-cities, receives less than 2 percent of all grants.

As if this imbalance weren't bad enough, the Office Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) graded COPS as "not performing: results not demonstrated." The bill authorizes \$1.15 billion for this program next fiscal year and another \$4.6 billion over the next 4 years. With so much taxpayer money at stake, and so few positive results demonstrated, why is the House missing this opportunity to fully consider how we might improve a program that is failing despite its good intentions?

The people of New Jersey watch a disproportionate share of their Federal taxes go to Washington to carry out this unproven program in other States. And for these reasons, I regret that I simply could not support this bill on the floor today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 1700, the COPS Improvements Act.

This program, begun under President Clinton, has invested over \$12 billion to add offi-

cers to the Nation's streets and schools, enhance crime-fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, provide training and technical assistance, administer grant programs, and advance community policing. Since President Bush has taken office, he has done everything he could to cut or eliminate funding for this worthwhile program.

In the Third District of Florida alone, over \$89,420,196 in COPS grants were awarded to law enforcement agencies: COPS grants have funded 1,192 additional police officers and sheriffs deputies to engage in community policing activities, including crime prevention, in the 3rd District; 24 local and State law enforcement agencies in the 3rd District have directly benefited from funding made available through the COPS Office; \$6,187,466 has been awarded to add 52 school resources officers to improve safety for students, teachers, and administrators in primary and secondary schools throughout the 3rd District; and \$10,780,628 has been awarded for crime-fighting technologies. This funding has allowed officers to spend more time on the streets of the 3rd District of Florida fighting and preventing crime through timesaving technology, information-sharing systems, and improved communications equipment.

My district is not alone. The COPS program has helped districts across the Nation by reducing crime and making communities safer for residents to live their lives.

Earlier this session, I introduced a resolution urging increased funding for both the COPS program and the Weed and Seed program, which is an innovative, comprehensive, multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and community revitalization. Both these programs go together—community policing and community revitalization.

I am submitting for the record a letter from the city of Orlando in support of this bill.

I urge support for the COPS program, safer communities and this bill.

CITY OF ORLANDO,
Orlando, FL, May 15, 2007.

Hon. CORRINE BROWN,
U.S. Representative,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN BROWN: I am writing on behalf of the City of Orlando to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 1700, the "COPS Improvements Act of 2007".

In 1994, Congress established the Office for Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and, in the decade that followed, our nation experienced a significant drop in crime rates. A large part of this success was the nation's commitment to community oriented policing, particularly its hiring component, which helped get more officers on the beat. This approach was validated by a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study of the COPS program, which stated that: "COPS-funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with declines in the rates of total index crimes, violent crimes, and property crime."

Now, after years of historically low crime rates, we are seeing a disturbing new trend—a jump in violent crimes in our City as well as in many of our nation's large and medium-sized cities. Just as the decrease in crime was directly related to an increased focus on hiring law enforcement officers at the state and local level, the more recent increase in certain crimes can be directly related to the loss of Federal funds supporting state and local law enforcement. This legislation will reinstitute the COPS program—a program we all know to be effective—and is needed now more than ever.

Specifically, this bill will establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services as a distinct entity within the U. S. Department of Justice and will reauthorize hiring programs for three specific purposes—community policing officers, local counterterrorism officers, and school resource officers. The bill also reauthorizes funds for technology grants and community prosecutors. The COPS program and the community policing approach are, and should continue to be, an important part of our national crime-fighting strategy.

Your commitment to reducing crime and your recognition of the important role local law enforcement plays throughout the nation is commendable. Be assured that the City of Orlando will do our part in the fight against crime and, given the proper resources, we can keep Orlando one of the safest cities in the nation.

Sincerely,

BUDDY DYER,
Mayor.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to show my support for H.R. 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act of 2007.

The original COPS bill, passed in 1994, enabled local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers across the Nation. H.R. 1700 will establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services as a distinct entity within the U.S. Department of Justice and will reauthorize hiring programs for three specific purposes: community policing officers, local counterterrorism officers, and school resource officers.

School resource officers are especially important to keep schools safe and to keep children in school. About 13.7 million or 22 percent of children and youth were physically bullied in the last year and 15.7 million were teased or emotionally bullied. Bullying behavior has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, and the use of drugs and alcohol. Having school resource officers on campuses will help combat this growing problem.

School resource officers are also needed to combat the national gang epidemic. In Los Angeles alone during the last 5 years, there were over 23,000 verified gang related violent crimes. These include 784 homicides, nearly 12,000 felony assaults, approximately 10,000 robberies and just under 500 rapes. It is imperative to reauthorize the COPS program and get more officers on the street to stop this trend.

I am proud to support this bill and encourage all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1700, COPS Reauthorization Act of 2007.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1700 the COPS Improvements Act of 2007.

Unfortunately, over the past several years funding for the hiring of additional police officers has been drastically reduced and the COPS program was basically eliminated.

The Community Oriented Policing Services Improvements Act revives the grant hiring program. These grants will allow local police departments to hire 50,000 additional police officers over the next 6 years.

I know in Houston after Hurricane Katrina we saw a significant rise in violent crime. This program will allow our local communities to hire additional police officers to protect their citizens.

This bill will also provide critical funding for technology grants and hiring community pro-

secutors. These are tools that our communities need to reduce our crime rates.

When the COPS program was eliminated our nation experienced a drastic increase in crime rates. By providing our law enforcement community with adequate funding and technology we will give them the ability to reduce crime rates.

I have strongly supported this program since it was first introduced during the 1990's. Today I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation today.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, in my remarks in support of H.R. 1700, the "COPS Improvements Act of 2007," I refer to amended language in the bill that would have required COPS grant recipients participating in the "Troops-to-Cops" program to give special hiring preference to former members of the Armed Forces who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I first introduced this provision in an amendment during the Judiciary Committee markup of H.R. 1700. I withdrew that amendment with the understanding that, after working with Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH upon the committee's urging to craft mutually agreeable language, this provision was to be included in the final version of H.R. 1700.

Through what I believe to have been an inadvertent omission, the hiring preference for veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom was not included in the final version of H.R. 1700 that has been presented to the full House of Representatives. It is my understanding that the language will be added either in the Senate bill or at conference and, therefore, will be contained in the bill sent to the President for his signature.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of HR 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation that will reauthorize the Community Oriented Policing Services grant programs.

Over the first 10 years of its existence, from 1994 to 2005, the COPS hiring grant programs have helped local law enforcement agencies hire 117,000 additional police officers. As a result there have been significant drops in the crime rates across our Nation. Unfortunately the previous Congress drastically reduced and then eliminated funding for the COPS hiring grants in the 2005 and 2006 funding cycles.

H.R. 1700 will reinvigorate the COPS program by authorizing \$600 million a year for hiring grants. This level of funding will help put an additional 50,000 police officers in our communities over the next 6 years. I am proud that this Congress is acting to restore funding for these hiring grants that are so critical to local law enforcement agencies across the country.

In addition, this legislation will authorize \$350 million for COPS technology grants. These grants will help local law enforcement agencies buy critical technology like computers for patrol cars and crime mapping software. I have seen this type of crime mapping software at work in the city of Santa Ana, California, in my district. This technology acts as a force multiplier, allowing each officer to be more effective in fighting crime and keeping our communities safe.

H.R. 1700 also authorizes \$200 million for programs that focus on hiring the community prosecutors that play a critical role in following up on police work and convicting criminals.

All of these COPS grant programs will provide critical resources to local law enforcement agencies across the country that are facing a variety of challenges including emerging and ongoing gang activity. In previous years, a COPS grant provided funding to the Santa Ana Police Department for Firearms Identification technology that can read the unique fingerprints that connect bullets and guns. The Santa Ana Police Department has been able to solve many gang-related shootings and other violent crimes by using this ballistics technology. I hope that the passage of this legislation will help ensure that law enforcement agencies across the nation benefit from the valuable COPS grant programs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1700.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1700, the Community Oriented Policing Services Reauthorization Act, which has provided greater numbers of police officers to protect our citizens in every State in the union. My district in Oregon has benefited significantly from this program through the addition of 279 police officers and a total of over \$24 million secured for local law enforcement agencies since 1994.

I find it perplexing that the administration continually attempts to reduce funding for COPS when independent studies confirm that the grants significantly contributed to the crime reduction in the late 1990s. Nationally, the strain on law enforcement has never been greater, as resources are stretched to combat the recent rise in crime while also addressing homeland security responsibilities. For this reason, I support the revitalization of this program to protect our families and give law enforcement the support they need.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1700, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SAFE AMERICAN ROADS ACT OF 2007

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1773) to limit the authority of the Secretary of Transportation to grant authority to motor carriers domiciled in Mexico to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1773

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,