



FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

1100 Connecticut Avenue • Suite 900 • Washington, DC 20036

(202) 293-1550

www.fleoa.org

June 1, 2015

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) is the largest nonpartisan, nonprofit law enforcement association representing over 26,000 federal law enforcement officers from the 65 federal agencies. Our members serve on the front lines every day protecting the nation from terrorist and criminal threats. Unfortunately, the challenge of protecting and serving in an electronic age increases the complexity of officer safety issues as technology makes information widely available and accessible.

With the recent amplification of anti-police sentiment through social media and other technology, law enforcement officers are always at risk. In 2014, for the Fifth year in a row, ambush attacks on law enforcement officers were the No. 1 cause of felonious deaths of law enforcement officers in the line of duty. Reinforcing this, the Senate recently passed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, which was enacted in order to give law enforcement officers fair warning about a threat and assist with tracking down criminals that attack law enforcement officers. We appreciate your and the Senate's support for this bill.

While that is a good use of technology to help protect law enforcement officers, other technologies exist that could minimize the effects of the National Blue Alert system and place a target on law enforcement officers. Google has recently incorporated a law enforcement location function on their Waze software application (app). While Google asserts that the Waze technology helps drivers avoid traffic incidents and other hazards on America's roadways, it also allows motorists to pinpoint the location of a law enforcement officer.

One simple remedy to this problem is to decrease the level of precision that identifies a police officer's location. If a general police presence was identified within a several mile radius rather than an exact location, it would still slow traffic — as proponents of the app claim is a major benefit — and it would do so for a wider area rather than a small section of roadway. This serves only to increase the effectiveness of the traffic safety element provided by the app.

Additionally, the purpose of uniformed police officers and marked police vehicles is to be visible to the public. However, the intent of a police presence is to be spontaneous. An important element to successful road patrolling is the ability to catch violators and criminals in the act. If everyone can track police officers and their location is predictable, the officers' effectiveness is compromised, plus the criminal or violator will know how to evade the



police using the information provided by the app. Conversely, if an individual needs law enforcement help and wants to use their mobile phone to find a police officer, we suggest they use it to dial 911 instead of racing toward an officer's location.

While there are many app users who enjoy police location features to avoid traffic tickets, this seems like a very poor reason to sacrifice the safety and life of a police officer. Therefore, we are requesting legislation that can provide for the safety and, under certain scenarios, the privacy of police officers across the country. There is abundant support for this kind of legislation within the law enforcement community, and we look forward to working with you to develop legislative language and a strategy to make this possible.

Thank you for considering this essential and life-saving legislation.

Sincerely,

Jon Adler

Jon Adler
FLEOA National President