



FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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 - Office of Inspector General
 - VA Police
- RETIRES

June 24, 2020

Dear Fellow Members,

Over the past few weeks, the law enforcement profession has come under increased scrutiny and attack following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. FLEOA was among the first of those to condemn Mr. Floyd's death, and to call for a national discussion about ways in which to improve our profession, including steps to improve accountability and transparency. We remain committed to this effort and have proactively engaged with numerous Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and the Administration to discuss realistic options for reform.

Despite the fringe calls to "defund the police" and improper claims that the actions of several officers in Minneapolis reflect the entirety of the law enforcement community, we know more than likely that reform will occur hopefully with the rank and file stakeholder input. Even while some of our members have been forced to endure violent physical assaults from anarchists, rioters, and looters who have chosen to resort to various forms of violence, including throwing Molotov cocktails and bricks at law enforcement, our advocacy is strong.

FLEOA has been firm with our protection of our 28,000 members, and the more than 800,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement, which work every day to protect and serve America. Unfortunately, we have witnessed some Members of Congress choose to join with the calls to "defund the police" and even support non-peaceful protestors for the sake of short-term political gains. This will do nothing to improve the trust between law enforcement and the communities we serve or keep those communities safe. We remain committed to working with lawmakers interested in real solutions, not damaging rhetoric which places law enforcement lives at risk.

Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) has been the exception and has sought to engage in the type of open, bipartisan discussion and dialogue that is so desperately needed at this time in our nation's history. That is why FLEOA has endorsed his legislation—the "JUSTICE Act"—which strikes a balance of reforms that will improve accountability, transparency, as well as the profession of law enforcement.

As the Senate prepares to take up Sen. Scott's legislation this week, we are prepared and ready to defend our profession. Our priorities during this process include:

- **Defending the Qualified Immunity.** There is a lot of negative reporting right now regarding qualified immunity and majority is inaccurate. Law enforcement need qualified immunity in order to carry out their jobs. Law enforcement is required to make split-second decisions. Without qualified immunity they may be hesitant to act when it is most needed.
- **Fight the Defunding Law Enforcement Narrative.** This language is a nonsensical and ridiculous notion being pushed by those that don't like or want law enforcement. Lawmakers, stakeholders, and members of the public overwhelmingly agree that law enforcement plays a critical role in the safety and

security of the American people and assertions that contradict this reality are counterproductive and unrealistic.

- **Support Lawful Use of Force.** American use of force is based on the unanimous Supreme Court case *Graham v Connor*. In 2017, FLEOA joined 10 other law enforcement groups to author and approve a National Consensus Policy and Discussion Paper on Use of Force, which is grounded in the *Graham v Connor* principles. We feel that this policy should become the foundation of all law enforcement use of force policies nationwide.
- **Fund and Support Body Cameras.** Clearly, with the attacks on law enforcement and the profession's credibility, body cameras have become the best tool to clear officers and sustain their integrity. While we feel that not all federal law enforcement officers should be mandated to use body cameras, we would support federal agencies with patrol functions to be funded and supported to be able to deploy body cameras where appropriate.
- **Increase Training and Professionalization.** Training should be mandated and funded properly. It should also be occurring with regularity including scenario-based training involving stress. The more this training piece is enhanced, the better officers we will have.
- **Support Community Oriented Policing.** Only with the community, can law enforcement be effective. The more law enforcement and communities are interacting, the better.
- **Support Mental Health Assistance.** Too often, law enforcement officers are placed in the position of acting as mental health counselors in the middle of mental health crisis. Traditional law enforcement are ill-equipped to handle this situation. Greater assistance for those experiencing mental illness will help prevent crises before they require law enforcement intervention.

These broad policy baselines are what we see as ways to enhance the profession and ensure better protections for all Americans. Over the course of this week, as Congress debates law enforcement reform measures, we will be continuously engaged with Congressional members to ensure that these baselines are kept in sight so we can ensure the profession is enhanced and professionalized while all Americans rights are protected.

Fraternally,

Larry Cosme

Larry Cosme
National President
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association