

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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June 30, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker and Leader McCarthy:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 26,000 members of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association to echo the concerns recently expressed by members of the Republican Conference regarding the proposed changes to the federal retirement system outlined in the President's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request. These proposed changes will have a disproportionate and negative impact on federal law enforcement officers, stripping them of hard-earned retirement benefits and diminishing the ability of agencies to recruit and retain qualified law enforcement personnel.

Federal law enforcement is a unique and demanding profession. It has no counterpart in either the public or private sector, nor does it compare equally with state and local law enforcement given the special skills and specializations required for federal law enforcement positions. It was in recognition of the unique nature of their work that Congress established similarly unique pay and benefit systems for federal law enforcement positions compared to the rest of the federal workforce. When it comes to recruiting and retaining federal law enforcement officers, it is these same pay and benefit systems that have kept us competitive with state and local law enforcement agencies.

In the FY 2018 budget request, the President has proposed several major changes to the federal retirement system. If enacted, these changes will almost certainly cause federal law enforcement agencies to experience reduced staffing levels, an upsurge in the retirement of experience personnel, and a decreased ability to recruit new officers and agents. This includes:

- Adjusting the FERS annuity calculation from a "High-3" to a "High-5," which would have a disparate impact on federal law enforcement personnel since they face mandatory separation from service at age 57 and cannot work additional years to make up the shortfall such a change would cause to their retirement annuity;
- Reducing cost of living (COLA) increases for CSRS recipients, eliminating COLAs for FERS recipients for active officers and retirees, and increasing the amount current federal law enforcement officers contribute towards a FERS annuity, as it is neither right nor fair to ask these brave men and women and their families to do more with less; and

- Eliminating the FERS annuity supplement for current federal law enforcement officers and new retirees, which is more important to federal law enforcement officers than other federal employees because they face mandatory separation at age 57 and elimination of the supplement would leave them with effectively only two-thirds of their retirement benefits for as many as twelve years.

While the Congressional Budget Office and Office of Management and Budget can estimate the budgetary savings to the government from these proposed changes, the increased costs to public safety and homeland security would be immeasurable.

Over the years, both of you have led from the front on issues of importance to our nation's federal, state, and local law enforcement officers and have been critical advocates for our efforts to reduce violent crime, protect public safety, and enhance homeland security. On behalf of the membership of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, we respectfully request that you do so again by rejecting the proposed changes to our hard-earned retirement benefits contained in the President's FY 2018 budget request.

Thank you in advance for your attention to our concerns on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Nathan R. Catura

Nathan R. Catura
National President
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association