

September 28, 2005- In support of COPS and SCAAP grants for Law Enforcement Agencies

Statement in support of the valuable contribution of the COPS and SCAAP grants

to the effectiveness of Law Enforcement Agencies

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Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of several important programs that will be reauthorized in HR 3402, The Department of Justice Authorization Act. The two programs that I'd like to highlight are the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). Both COPS and SCAAP provide critical resources that help local law enforcement do their job.

The COPS program consists of Federal grants to provide assistance to eligible police departments to help improve community policing efforts and law enforcement support activities including: hiring or rehiring police officers, purchasing equipment; paying overtime; and building support systems.

The COPS program has long had bipartisan support in Congress, even in the face of repeated proposed budget cuts from this Administration. Despite these budget proposals Congress worked in a bipartisan way to appropriate funding for the COPS program and ensure that our local law enforcement agencies continued to receive these valuable grants. I hope that the formal reauthorization of the COPS program through HR 3402 clarifies the Congressional recognition of the significance of the COPS programs to local law enforcement, and the importance of the COPS program now and in the future.

The SCAAP reimburses states and localities for the cost of detaining criminal aliens. These funds are critical for local law enforcement agencies; especially those in border states like California, that routinely cover the cost of incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens. Between FY2001 and FY2005, SCAAP funding decreased by \$265 million. This is unacceptable and places a significant burden on cash-strapped States that desperately need reimbursement.

I supported the Kolbe/Dreier/Lewis amendment to increase the authorized funding for SCAAP to \$750 million for FY06, \$850 million for FY07, and \$950 million for FY08-11. I am pleased that this amendment was accepted as it will provide much needed funds to the states and improve their ability to work with the Federal government on border security and immigration issues.