

May 15, 2007: Cops Improvements Act

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez

COPS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2007

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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.