

June 4, 2007 - Rep. Slaughter Speaks on Reducing Crime Through Successful COPS Program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"I am proud to see the reauthorization of the enormously successful COPS program which gives our local law enforcement agencies the tools they need to fight and reduce crime in our communities," said Rep. Slaughter. "By recommitting to the COPS program, cities like Buffalo will have the resources they need to better balance their priorities and balance their budgets. After years of disinvestment, the new Congress has made it a priority to start reinvesting in our nation and communities again. This program is part of this reinvestment effort and it couldn't come at a more critical time."

"Over the last ten years, this program has allowed local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers - which helped to significantly reduce crime across the country. Our home state of New York received nearly one billion dollars in COPS hiring grants funding over those years, which enabled our state to hire over 11,000 additional police officers," concluded Rep. Slaughter.

Created in 1994, the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) hiring grants program has helped local law enforcement agencies across the country to hire 117,000 additional police officers - including 223 in the City of Buffalo. The House of Representatives passed a new authorization bill on May 15th which will allow for the hiring of up to 50,000 new police officers nationwide over the next 6 years.

The bill now moves to the Senate, where it has been listed as a top priority. President Bush also has indicated that he will sign the bill after it passes through the Senate.

H.R. 1700 has been endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

BACKGROUND:

COPS History in New York's 28th Congressional District:

- Erie County has received \$2,592,144 in COPS Awards allowing them to hire 42 officers.

- The city of Buffalo received \$17,962,591 through COPS and used those funds to hire 223 officers

- To date, \$32,811,996.00 in COPS grants have been awarded to law enforcement agencies.

- COPS grants have funded over 400 additional police officers and sheriffs deputies in the 28th District.

- 22 local and state law enforcement agencies in the 28th District have directly benefited from funding made available through the COPS Office.

- \$3,875,000 has been awarded to add 31 school resource officers to improve safety for students, teachers and administrators in primary and secondary schools throughout the 28th District.

- \$5,762,800 has been awarded for crime-fighting technologies, allowing officers to spend more time on the streets of the 28th District fighting crime.

Key Points of H.R. 1700, the COPS Reauthorization Act:

- Created in 1994 under the Clinton Administration, the COPS hiring grants program was an enormously successful, popular program - helping local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers, in every state in the union, from 1995 to 2005.

- Under the COPS program, our nation experienced a significant drop in crime rates - and independent studies confirm that COPS hiring grants helped contribute to this reduced crime.

- Unfortunately, over the last few years, the GOP-led Congress sharply reduced the funding for COPS hiring grants - reducing them from more than \$1 billion a year in the late 1990s to \$10 million in 2005 and eliminating them entirely in 2006.

- At the same time that the GOP-led Congress sharply reduced and then eliminated COPS hiring grants, crime rates began to rise again.

- This bill reinvigorates the highly successful COPS program. It calls for putting 50,000 additional police officers on the street over the next 6 years - authorizing \$600 million a year for COPS hiring grants. It also authorizes \$350 million a

year for COPS technology grants, and \$200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

- This bill is supported by numerous law enforcement organizations, including the Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations and the National Sheriffs' Association.

This bill reinvigorates the COPS program - including authorizing \$600 million per year for hiring grants, which could fund up to 50,000 new cops on the beat over the next 6 years. The bill authorizes \$600 million per year to hire officers to engage in community policing, serve as School Resource Officers, or engage in counter-terrorism duties. Regarding counter-terrorism, the bill explicitly authorizes that COPS hiring grants can be used to hire and train officers to perform "intelligence, anti-terror, or homeland security duties."

The bill also authorizes \$350 million per year for COPS technology grants. In addition to the hiring grants, the bill also authorizes \$350 million a year for the next six years for technology grants. These grants will allow police agencies to purchase things like lap top computers for patrol cars, crime mapping software, and interoperable communications equipment. For example, in endorsing the bill, the National Sheriffs' Association states, "The technology grants that the bill supports will allow sheriffs to increase their interoperability with other agencies, and also provide sheriffs with the opportunity to obtain necessary state-of-the-art equipment for crime tracking and reporting."

In addition, the bill authorizes \$200 million per year to help hire community prosecutors. The bill also authorizes funds for community prosecuting programs - including programs that assign prosecutors to try cases in specific geographic areas.

The bill also contains "troops to cops" provisions providing for hiring police officers coming out of the military. Finally, the bill contains provisions to encourage state and local police agencies to hire former military members for some of the new law enforcement jobs under the bill.

Over the last few years, under President Bush, the Republican-led Congress sharply reduced the funding for COPS hiring grants - reducing funding from more than \$1 billion a year in the late 1990s to \$198 million in 2003 and \$10 million in 2005. Then, in 2006, the Republican-led Congress completely eliminated the program. At the same time of the elimination of the program, violent crime has spiked across the nation.

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