



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

PATRICK YOES NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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The Honorable Jefferson H. Van Drew
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Stephen I. Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Van Drew and Cohen,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for H.R. 7398, the “Public Safety Free Speech Act.”

Law enforcement officers and other public safety employers put themselves in harm’s way to protect their communities, and they have the right to publicly express their views and needs when it comes to workplace issues as long as they do so while not on duty or acting in any official capacity. Basic First Amendment protections should not be denied to law enforcement officers just because they work for a government agency, but our members often face disciplinary action—up to and including termination—simply by making comments at a city council meeting, writing a letter to the editor, or engaging in political activities. They should not have to be worried that they will be fired or retaliated against by their superiors for saying or writing something that they don’t like or that goes against popular opinion.

Your legislation would clarify and protect the speech of a public safety employee by allowing them to take legal action against an employer who violates this right. Law enforcement officers should, when off-duty, be allowed to express their needs and views on workplace conditions, salaries and benefits, as well as administrative policies without fear of retaliation from their supervisors or employers. With this speech protected, officers would be better able to voice their questions and concerns in the workplace, improving their working conditions and as well as their ability to serve their communities.

On behalf of the more than 373,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you both for your leadership on this issue. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: Robert Fox, President, New Jersey State Lodge
Kevin Vernon, National Trustee, New Jersey State Lodge
Scottie Delashmit, President, Tennessee State Lodge
Johnny Crumby, National Trustee, Tennessee State Lodge