



LICKING COUNTY F.O.P. LODGE #127



LCFOP#127 Newsletter January/February 2010

www.fop127.com - www.fopohio.org - www.grandlodgefop.org

"There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow" Orison Swett Marden (1850-1924)

President Darrin D. Logan Newark PD
Vice President Mark Emde Heath PD
Secretary Erik McKee Newark PD
Treasurer Paul Davis Newark PD
Past President John Mason Heath PD
Sgt. At Arms Jay Gowans Retired LCSO
Chaplain Cliff Biggers Newark PD
Lodge Trustees
Retired Jim Landis Retired LCSO
Small Agencies Scott Fulton Adult Probation
Heath PD Mark Phillips
Newark PD Adam Pfannenschmidt
LCSO Marc Brill
Pataskala PD Mike Rietz
Granville PD Shawn Wilson

16 Ways To Kill an Organization

1. Don't attend meetings.
2. Be sure to leave before a meeting is over.
3. Never say anything at meetings. Wait until you get outside.
4. When at meetings, vote to do everything, and then go home and do nothing.
5. Next day, find fault with the officers and committees.
6. Take no part in the organization's affairs.
7. Be sure to sit in the back, so you can talk to a friend.
8. Get all the organization will give you... but give nothing in return.
9. Never ask anyone to join the organization.
10. Talk co-operation, but never co-operate.
11. Threaten to resign at every opportunity, and try to get others to do likewise.
12. If asked to help on anything, always say you don't have the time.
13. Never read anything pertaining to the organization, as you may become enlightened.
14. Never accept an office, as it is easier to criticize than to accept responsibility and make decisions.
15. If appointed to a committee, never give any time or service to the committee.
16. Never do anything more than you have to, and when others willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help the cause along, then howl because the organization is run by a clique.

New Officers for 2010-2011

The positions on the Executive Board will stay the same as the previous two year term with the exception of the Newark PD Trustee. Adam Pfannenschmidt will take over for Chuck Wilhelm. Thank you for your service Chuck, you were a dedicated member of the Executive Board for the past 4 years and you gave your time and energy to the FOP unselfishly. We look forward to seeing you at future meetings and involved with future events.

Paul Davis has agreed to stay on as the Treasurer, but only until we can find a member to replace him. Paul has done an outstanding job the past two years and our financial records are in immaculate shape. If you are interested in this position contact Paul and he can show and tell you about the position. We look forward to a challenging next couple of years and the Executive Board will to its best to continue guiding our organization towards goals with the best interest of the organization, the organization comes first.

Challenge Coin

There are still over 400 challenge coins available. Last spring when we first got the coins there was a lot of interest and people were buying them, but now it has died down. The coins cost \$10.00 a piece or 3 coins for \$25.00. Support your lodge by purchasing a coin (or 3) and you get a beautifully crafted challenge coin that is unique to our lodge and reflects your support of the Licking County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #127.

You can see the design of the coin by looking at the top of the newsletter, the front of the coin is on the upper left side and the back of the coin is on the upper right. Contact President Darrin Logan with questions or to purchase any coins.

More information is available on line at; www.fop127.com

Hartford Fair - Parking Detail - Fundraiser

At the January 2010, monthly meeting the membership present voted to stay involved with the Hartford Fair and conduct the parking detail again this year, August of 2010. This is a great fundraiser for our organization and we only ask for 3-8 hours of your time for a day in August. We will be setting up a meeting with the Hartford Fair Board to discuss and work out the details for this year. Please volunteer a few hours of your time in August for this event. We will be approaching the membership very soon to start filling the available slots. We had a lot of volunteers last year and we would like to get even more this year. Anyone can help... FOP, FOPA, family, friends, co-workers, etc...

Weekly and Monthly Drawings

The weekly drawing is conducted every Tuesday at 8:00 PM, unless it is a meeting night, then the drawing takes place at the end of the FOP meeting. Get into the Beasley Lounge each week to pay your \$2.00 and sign up for the weekly drawing. The next end of month drawing will be on Friday January 29 @ 9:00 PM, so get to the Beasley Lounge to pay your \$5.00 to get signed up for the January monthly drawing.

Monthly FOP and FOPA Meetings

This is a friendly reminder as to the rules of our organization(s) on a meeting night.

First of all, the monthly meetings are always the first Tuesday of a month, unless a holiday falls on that day. If a holiday falls on that day then the meetings are moved to the second Tuesday of the month.

The FOP holds an Executive Board Meeting at 6:30 PM in our office, it usually lasts an hour. All Executive Board Members are expected to attend unless they are excused before the meeting by the President.

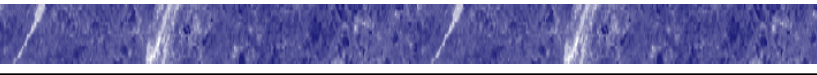
The FOPA holds their monthly meeting starting at 6:30 PM in the Blue Line Banquet Hall and it usually lasts an hour. **ANY** FOPA member(s) that are in the building at the time of or during the meeting **MUST** attend the meeting. They are not permitted to be in the Beasley Lounge during a meeting. If they do not want to attend the meeting they will be asked to leave the Beasley Lounge during the duration of the meeting. If they refuse then proceedings will begin to have the member(s) suspended from the Beasley Lounge for a specified time. Members are not permitted to come back into the Beasley Lounge after their meeting has started (to make additional purchases). NO EXCEPTIONS.

The FOP holds their monthly meeting starting at 7:30 PM (or as soon as the FOPA meeting has concluded) in the Blue Line Banquet Hall and it usually lasts an hour to an hour and a half. **ANY** FOP member(s) that are in the building at the time of or during the meeting **MUST** attend the meeting. They are not permitted to be in the Beasley Lounge during a meeting. If they do not want to attend the meeting they will be asked to leave the Beasley Lounge during the duration of the meeting. If they refuse then proceedings will begin to have the member(s) suspended from the Beasley Lounge for a specified time. Members are not permitted to come back into the Beasley Lounge after their meeting has started (to make additional purchases). NO EXCEPTIONS.

The bottom line is if you are in the building, you must attend your meeting. You can take purchases from the Beasley Lounge in with you to your meeting, but you are not permitted leave your meeting to come back in to the Beasley Lounge to make additional purchases during the meeting. Please comply with these established rules. Thank you.

Class III Bingo - Pull Tickets

We completed the fiscal year for the sales of our tickets on October 31, 2009. We had our license for six months and our profit was just under \$7,000.00. The new fiscal year started on November 1, 2009. We are looking forward to a full twelve months of ticket sales. With the money available from the ticket sales we have been able to purchase a new kegerator for the Beasley Lounge so we can have draft beer available again, purchase a salt spreader for the parking lot (which has come in handy the last couple of weeks), purchase a scale to count tickets (added accountability), provide money to the general fund when needed, and give money to other organizations in the form of sponsorships and assistance. We would like to start planning improvements to the Blue Line Banquet Hall (flooring, round tables, sound proofing) and come up with a plan to get the rest of the driveway paved as well as the parking lot. The money we make from the ticket sales could go a long way in making some of these projects a reality. So be sure and stop by the Beasley Lounge and take your chance at some pull tickets.



E-Mail Addresses

WE NEED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESSES!!!

You can e-mail dlogan@fop127.com or mstare@fop127.com and we can add your e-mail to our growing list.

Upcoming Events

January 16 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

January 18 - Martin Luther King Day

January 19 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

January 23 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

January 26 - Weekly Drawing

January 29 - End of Month Drawing @ 9 PM

January 30 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

February 2 - FOP #127 Exec. Board Meeting @ 6 PM

February 2 - FOPA #10 Monthly Meeting @ 6:30 PM

February 2 - FOP #127 Monthly Meeting @ 7:30 PM

Feb 2 - Weekly Drawing after FOP Meeting (approx 9 PM)

February 6 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

February 9 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

February 13 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

February 14 - Valentine's Day

February 16 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

February 20 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

February 23 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

February 26 - End of Month Drawing @ 9 PM

February 27 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

March 2 - FOP #127 Exec. Board Meeting @ 6 PM

March 2 - FOPA #10 Monthly Meeting @ 6:30 PM

March 2 - FOP #127 Monthly Meeting @ 7:30 PM

March 2 - Weekly Drawing after FOP Meeting (approx 9 PM)

March 6 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

March 9 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

March 13 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

March 16 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 20 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

March 23 - Weekly Drawing @ 8 PM

March 26 - End of Month Drawing @ 9 PM

March 27 - Jack of Hearts Drawing @ 10:30 PM

FOP Jack of Hearts Game

\$1.00 per ticket - you can buy as many tickets as you want to buy each week. Write your **first** and **last name** and the **card number** you want turned over on the "Jack of Hearts" board on the ticket. You cannot purchase tickets for someone else that is not present at the Beasley Lounge. The cards on the "Jack of Hearts" board are numbered 1-54. A ticket will be drawn each week on Saturday @ 10:30 PM in the Beasley Lounge. Ticket sales **will be cut off** at 9:00 PM each Saturday night, **no exceptions**. Prize amounts vary. It is the FOP members, FOPA members, and all eligible guests responsibility to know the rules and regulations. By purchasing a ticket(s) you accept the rules.

The complete rules are posted in the Beasley Lounge.

LCFOP#127 on Facebook

We are now on Facebook. Look up Licking County Lodge #127 and join our group. There are pictures from events, postings for drawings, a discussion board, and other valuable information.

LCSO Retirements

Captain Ray Back and Captain Tom Lee both retired on 12-31-2009 from the LCSO. They both had very long and distinguished careers. We wish you both good fortune and a long retirement, don't be strangers!!

Office Hours

Wednesday
8 AM until 4 PM
Mary Stare,
Admin. Assistant

Beasley Lounge Hours

Tue - Fri 4 PM - 1 AM
Saturday 6 PM - 1 AM

255 South 6th Street
P.O. Box 944
Newark, Ohio 43058-0944

Office: 740-345-4831
Beasley Lounge/Fax: 740-345-0416
Contact the President at:
dlogan@fop127.com
(Or cell # 740-404-8511)

Top Legislative Priorities for the 111th Congress

I. Social Security Issues

A. Support H.R. 235/S. 484, the "Social Security Fairness Act"

The FOP strongly supports legislation to restore full Social Security benefits for law enforcement officers by repealing both the "Windfall Elimination Provision" (WEP) and the "Government Pension Offset" (GPO).

B. Opposing any legislation that would require the participation of public employees in Social Security

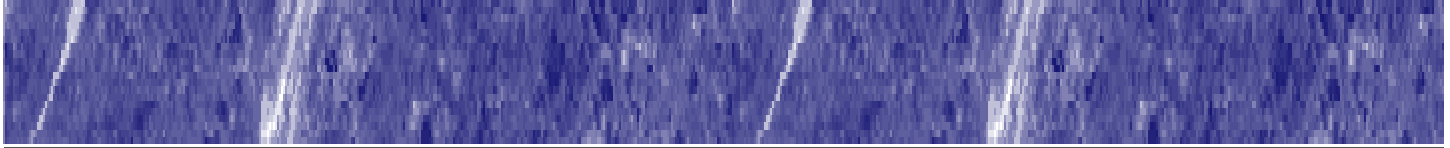
The FOP also vehemently opposes legislation which would mandate participation in Social Security for current or newly hired public employees who participate in their own retirement systems and do not pay into Social Security.

II. Support H.R. 413, the "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act"

The FOP strongly supports this legislation, which would guarantee the right of public employees to bargain collectively with their employers over hours, wages and conditions of employment. The bill mandates that each State pass laws providing minimum collective bargaining rights to their public safety employees and outlines certain provisions to be included in those laws. Strikes and lockouts are prohibited by the bill and States with collective bargaining laws already on the books will be exempt from the Federal statute.

III. Support H.R. 1972, the "Law Enforcement Officer's Procedural Bill of Rights Act"

The FOP strongly supports a "bill of rights" for law enforcement officers who are, in a number of jurisdictions, denied their due process rights by police administrators and management in noncriminal proceedings. There is a need for a minimum level of procedural protections for law enforcement officers accused of administrative wrongdoing because of the gravity of potential harm to officers created by this lack of uniform safeguards.



Updated - FOP Day on the Hill 2010

The FOP *Day on The Hill* 2010 will begin on Monday, 8 February 2010. The National Legislative Office and the National Legislative Committee will host a short briefing on our legislative agenda at the District of Columbia Lodge #1 at 711 4th Street, NW. The briefing will take place on Monday afternoon and last approximately one hour. Additional details will be forthcoming.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 9-10 February, will be devoted to your meetings with Members from your home States and districts. **These appointments should be made in advance!!!** Event participants should make every effort to have their Representative or Senator attend the meeting along with the appropriate staff person.

Accommodations for Day on the Hill Participants

The Grand Lodge has arranged for accommodations at [The Fairfax at Embassy Row](#) at the rate of \$159 per night plus tax.

The Fairfax at Embassy Row is located at 2100 Massachusetts Avenue NW in Washington, DC and is within walking distance of the Metro's Red Line.

Make your reservations now by calling 202-293-2100 and tell them you are with the Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police's "Day on the Hill" event to get this special rate.

This special rate is available only until 1 February--so make your reservations NOW!!!

FOP Makes Strong Push on Bargaining Bill

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, spent all of last week in Washington, D.C. working in tandem with the staff in the National Legislative Office in an effort to get the language of S. 1611, "Public Employee-Employer Cooperation Act," incorporated into several likely pieces of legislation that Congress will be considering before ending the session.

"We're cautiously optimistic," Canterbury said. "Congress has several bills that it must complete before concluding its business for the year. The fact is, we have a lot of bipartisan support for the bill and we've approached it in a very honest and open way. We do have a chance of getting this done."

The legislation, which was introduced by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) and the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), would recognize the fundamental right of public safety employees to form and join unions and bargain collectively with their employers over wages, hours, and working conditions without undermining existing State collective bargaining laws. The legislation does not require binding arbitration, protects existing right-to-work laws, and specifically prohibits strikes and lockouts. The bill has attracted a lot of support in the House and Senate from both sides of the aisle.

"The FOP and our friends at the International Association of Fire Fighters have been working to pass this legislation for more than a decade," Canterbury said. "Just as we were very close last May, winning a key procedural vote, I do think we have the support we need. It's the timing."

Legislation Opposed by the NFOP

- **H.R. 59** (*Jackson-Lee, D-TX*), the "Ex-Offender Voting Rights Act," would allow convicted felons to vote in Federal elections if these felons are denied the ability to vote by the State in which they reside;
- **H.R. 68** (*Jackson-Lee, D-TX*), the "No More Tulias: Drug Law Enforcement Evidentiary Standards Improvement Act," which would significantly limit States who fund anti-drug task forces from receiving Federal funding from the Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistant Grants program;
- **H.R. 73** (*Jackson-Lee, D-TX*), the "Traffic Stops Along the Border Statistics Study Act," would require the U.S. Attorney General to collect race and other data on traffic stops made by State and local law enforcement officers;
- **H.R. 1409** (*Miller, D-CA*), the "Employee Free Choice Act," which would replace the current democratic process of secret ballots in the selection or certification on a union as the bargaining units with a "card check" system;
- **H.R. 3245** (*Scott, D-VA*), the "Fairness in Cocaine Sentencing Act," which would remove references to "cocaine base" from the U.S. Code, thereby greatly reducing the sentences of offenders convicted for offenses involving crack cocaine;
- **H.R. 3251** (*Gingrey, R-GA*), legislation that would repeal certain provisions of Title 5, United States Code, that allow Federal employees, including law enforcement officers, who represent their colleagues, to negotiate collective bargaining agreements on official time;
- **H.R. 3335** (*Conyers, D-MI*), the "Democracy Restoration Act," would allow convicted felons to vote in Federal elections if these felons are denied the ability to vote by the State in which they reside;
- **S. 560** (*Kennedy, D-MA*), the "Employee Free Choice Act," which would replace the current democratic process of secret ballots in the selection or certification on a union as the bargaining units with a "card check" system;
- **S. 650** (*Feingold, D-WI*), the "Federal Death Penalty Abolition Act," would abolish the death penalty option for all Federal crimes which currently carry that penalty;
- **TOP PRIORITY** Legislation which would mandate participation in Social Security for all newly hired State and local employees;
- Legislation which would weaken the overtime protections for law enforcement officers in current Federal regulations;
- Legislation or amendments that would have the effect of weakening P.L. 106-185, the "Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act of 2000";
- Legislation which would create or fund "civilian review boards" of law enforcement at any level of government;
- Legislation which would normalize relations with Cuba until that nation ceases to be a safe harbor for cop-killers and other fugitives; and

For more information, please feel free to contact the National Legislative Office at (202) 547-8189 or via [e-mail](#).

Legislation Supported by the NFOP

- **PASSED!!! H.R. 1/PL 111-5 (Obey, D-WI)**, the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," specifically the funding for State and local law enforcement programs;
- **H.R. 18 (Bartlett, R-MD)**, the "Powder Crack Cocaine Penalty Equalization Act," would eliminate the disparity in sentencing between crack and powder cocaine offenses by changing the applicable amounts for powder cocaine to those currently applicable to crack cocaine;
- **TOP PRIORITY H.R. 235 (Berman, D-CA)**, the "Social Security Fairness Act," would repeal both the "Windfall Elimination Provision" and the "Government Pension Offset" in current Social Security law;
- **H.R. 248 (Green, D-TX)**, the "Law Enforcement Officers Flag Memorial Act," would provide the families of deceased law enforcement officers with a flag that has been flown over the U.S. Capitol;
- **TOP PRIORITY H.R. 413 (Kildee, D-MI)**, the "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act," would recognize the right of law enforcement and other public safety officers to bargain collectively with their employers;
- **H.R. 560 (Brady, R-TX)**, the "Safe Prisons Communications Act," would authorize the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons or the chief executive officer of a state to petition the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to permit the installation of devices to prevent, jam, or interfere with wireless communications within the geographic boundaries of a specific prison, penitentiary, or correctional facility under his or her jurisdiction;
- **H.R. 583 (Lee, D-CA)**, the "Community Partners Next Door Act," would establish a housing program that would provide a fifty percent (50%) discount for teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and public safety officers purchasing certain eligible asset properties for use as their primary residence, including a \$100 down payment on any related insured mortgage, and a higher Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan limit for such purchases in high cost areas;
- **H.R. 673 (Filner, D-CA)**, the "Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act," would provide 6 (c) benefits to approximately 30,000 Federal law enforcement officers who currently do not have them;
- **H.R. 675 (Filner, D-CA)**, legislation which would grant statutory arrest authority to law enforcement officers employed by the U.S. Department of Defense;
- **H.R. 958 (Moran, D-VA)**, the "Federal Employee Retirement System Sick Leave Equity Act," would allow Federal employees under FERS to be credited for unused sick time;
- **H.R. 959 (Murphy, D-PA)**, the "Officer Danny Faulkner Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act" would provide increased Federal Pell Grants for children whose parent or guardian died as a result of performing duties of a law enforcement or other public safety officer;
- **H.R. 1006 (Stupak, D-MI)**, the "Secondary Metal Theft Prevention Act," would require secondary metal recycling agents to keep records of their transactions in order to deter individuals and enterprises engaged in the theft and interstate sale of stolen secondary metal;
- **PASSED!!! H.R. 1105 (Obey, D-WI)**, the "Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009," specifically, the appropriations for the U.S. Department of Justice and its State and local law enforcement assistance programs;
- **H.R. 1139 (Weiner, D-NY)**, the "COPS Improvement Act," would provide full funding for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the programs it administers;
- **H.R. 1221 (Brady, R-TX)**, the "Public Servant Retirement Protection Act," would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and replace it with a more equitable, individualized calculation of Social Security benefits;
- **TOP PRIORITY H.R. 1972 (Stupak, D-MI)**, the "Law Enforcement Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights Act," would protect the due process rights of officers during internal investigations;
- **H.R. 2064 (King, R-NY)**, the "See Something, Say Something Act," would expand the current immunity from liability to cover all persons who report suspicious activity to authorities, not just suspicious activity which occurs on Federal property or transportation systems;
- **H.R. 3752 (Forbes, R-VA)**, the "Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act Improvements Act," which would amend certain provisions of the Federal statute which exempts qualified active and retired law enforcement officers from State and local prohibitions on the carriage of firearms; reducing the sentences of offenders convicted for offenses involving crack cocaine;
- **H.J.Res. 8 (Emerson, R-MO)**, would amend the Constitution to give Congress the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States;
- **S. 132 (Feinstein, D-CA)**, the "Gang Abatement and Prevention Act," is a comprehensive, national approach to the problem of gang violence which would establish a High Intensity Interstate Gang Activity Area (HIIGAA) program to facilitate greater cooperation between local, State and Federal law enforcement in identifying, targeting, and eliminating violent gangs in areas where gang activity is particularly prevalent and define new offenses which will enable law enforcement to fight gangs and gang-related activity more effectively;
- **S. 167 (Kohl, D-WI)**, the "COPS Improvement Act," would establish the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) as a distinct entity within the U.S. Department of Justice and reauthorize the law enforcement officer hiring program, as well as reauthorize funds for technology grants and community prosecutors;
- **S. 251 (Hutchison, R-TX)**, the "Safe Prisons Communications Act," would authorize the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons or the chief executive officer of a state to petition the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to permit the installation of devices to prevent, jam, or interfere with wireless communications within the geographic boundaries of a specific prison, penitentiary, or correctional facility under his or her jurisdiction;
- **S. 252 (Akaka, D-HI)**, the "Veterans Health Care Authorization Act," specifically, Title VII, which would expand the arrest authority of the VA Police Service and increase the uniform allowance for these officers;
- **S. 256 (Feinstein, D-CA)**, the "Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act," will strengthen Federal law by improving the self-certification process for retail sales of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine;
- **S. 258 (Feinstein, D-CA)**, the "Saving Kids from Dangerous Drugs Act," would increase penalties on those who tailor market illegal drugs to entice children to purchase them;
- **S. 386 (Leahy, D-VT)**, the "Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act," which would strengthen the ability of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute fraudulent activity in connection with bailout and recovery legislation;
- **S. 418 (Klobuchar, D-MN)**, the "Secondary Metal Theft Prevention Act," would require secondary metal recycling agents to keep records of their transactions in order to deter individuals and enterprises engaged in the theft and interstate sale of stolen secondary metal;
- **TOP PRIORITY S. 484 (Feinstein, D-CA)**, the "Social Security Fairness Act," would repeal both the "Windfall Elimination Provision" and the "Government Pension Offset" in current Social Security law;
- **S. 490 (Hutchison, R-TX)**, the "Public Servant Retirement Protection Act," would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and replace it with a more equitable, individualized calculation of Social Security benefits;
- **S. 569 (Levin, D-WI)**, the "Incorporation Transparency and Law Enforcement Assistance Act," would help law enforcement combat the misuse of U.S. corporations by requiring States to obtain beneficial ownership information for corporations and limited liability companies formed under State law;
- **S. 879 (Collins, R-ME)**, the "See Something, Say Something Act," would expand the current immunity from liability to cover all persons who report suspicious activity to authorities, not just suspicious activity which occurs on Federal property or transportation systems;
- **S. 1039 (Kerry, D-MA)**, the "Protect Those Who Serve Act," which would authorize up to \$500 million in grants to States to provide up to eighty percent (80%) of the costs of the renovation, modernization, and construction of law enforcement facilities;
- **S. 1132 (Leahy, D-VT)**, the "Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act Improvements Act," would improve the provisions related to carriage of concealed firearms by qualified active and retired law enforcement officers;
- **TOP PRIORITY S. 1611 (Gregg, R-NH)**, the "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act," would recognize the right of law enforcement and other public safety officers to bargain collectively with their employers;
- **S.J.Res. 2 (Vitter, R-LA)**, would amend the Constitution to give Congress the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States;
- Legislation to provide Federal law enforcement officers with a rebuttable presumption that a causal connection exists between their occupation and heart, lung, and hypertension disorders;
- Legislation which would protect the personal information of law enforcement officers and their families from public access;

For more information, please feel free to contact the National Legislative Office at (202) 547-8189 or via [e-mail](mailto:).

State Struggles With Public Retirement Systems

AKRON, OH – Tallmadge Mayor Christopher Grimm understands the debate over public pensions from both sides of the issue. He will benefit handsomely when he decides to retire thanks to the state public pension system. So much so that Grimm, 55, doesn't like to tell people about those financial and medical benefits. "You almost look embarrassed at what you're going to get when you retire, as opposed to when my dad retired from the rubber shop," the longtime mayor and former Summit County environmental services worker said. As appreciative as Grimm is to have a secure financial retirement ahead, he wonders how local governments and taxpayers can keep providing what he calls the "Cadillac of retirement programs." "Public officials shouldn't receive more than what the people they represent get," he said. Grimm and others are closely watching proposals now before the Ohio legislature that would make substantial changes to the state's public pension system. Those include boosting taxpayer and employee contributions for the teacher, police and fire, and Highway Patrol retirement funds. Ohio's five pension plans aren't in any immediate financial trouble and can keep paying out for decades, experts said. Still, the four major funds, excluding the one for the Highway Patrol, were underfunded by \$26.1 billion in 2008, according to an annual report released in October by the Public Fund Survey, which is sponsored by the National Association State Retirement Administrators and the National Council on Teacher Retirement. Experts blame the problem on people living longer, rising health-care costs for retirees—a benefit that isn't even required by the plans—and investment portfolios taking a hit during the stock market decline. The dollar amounts are staggering. Statewide, taxpayers paid \$4.1 billion toward pension plans in 2008, and would have paid an additional \$325.8 million under the proposals if they had been fully implemented that year. Summit County taxpayers alone contributed \$174 million in 2008. Under the proposal before lawmakers, teachers in the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio would pay an additional 2.5 percent of their salary toward their pension, increasing the amount to 12.5 percent; while the contribution from schools would rise the same percentage to 16.5 percent. Police and firefighters in the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund would be required to pay 12 percent, up from 10 percent. And local governments eventually would kick in 25 percent—up from 24 percent for firefighters and 19.5 percent for police. The increases would be phased in over several years, but they still could have a severe effect on budgets and services at a time when governments are cutting personnel and dealing with disenfranchised taxpayers.

Local Reaction -

For the city of Akron, each 1 percent increase represents about \$534,000. "It would hurt. It would hurt a lot," said Diane Miller-Dawson, finance director for the city of Akron, which offered buyouts and laid off workers last year. "And each dollar we have to pay out continues to drive the bottom line. "Ultimately, as government entities spend more money on pension contributions, they are going to have to cut services or find another source of revenue." Chris Martin, a Cuyahoga Falls firefighter for 10 years and president of the Firefighters Union Local 494, doesn't want to see benefits cut, saying many public workers take government jobs because of the benefits. "It's a scary, dangerous thing," he said about potential changes. "We all live for our retirements." Martin also said he doesn't see local governments and schools passing the cost on to taxpayers. Instead, they will seek concessions from workers, he said.

"I really don't think any city is going to take those increases and swallow them," he said. "I think that through collective bargaining, they are going to try to push the cost on to us." Lawrence Petrick Jr., a Shaker Heights firefighter who helped craft the proposal for the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund, said taxpayers should understand that the retirement benefits help attract qualified individuals. "It's a dangerous field," he said. "It's a cost of having the safety that we do. We should have good pensions for the dangers and injuries that we do take." Public workers in Ohio do not qualify for Social Security benefits, so their public pension must be high enough to make up for that loss of potential income, experts said. The increased contribution, though, isn't the only concern for workers. They also are worried about recommendations to increase the retirement age. For example, the age would jump from 48 to 52 for new police officers and firefighters. "I believe that the police officers and firefighters pension system should not match the private sector because you're comparing apples to oranges," said Paul Hlynsky, president of the Akron police union, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 7. "Police officers and firefighters get shot and hurt. They get broken bones. They get diseases from working on the job. They have a right to retire at an earlier age. "Many nonpolice entities and lobbyists want that out of bitterness because they don't feel it's right to retire at 48."

Ohio Not Alone -

Ohio isn't the only state struggling with its public pension system. The Public Fund Survey estimated that the 125 state and local pension funds in its October report were underfunded by \$437.5 billion in 2008. "Most public sector—state and local—pension systems in the U.S. are underfunded at present, estimated by some at around half a trillion dollars or more," said Olivia Mitchell, executive director at the Pension Research Council and a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. But underfunded doesn't mean broke, experts said. The pension funds operate similar to mortgages, with the "underfunded" amount representing the payments owed, said Keith Brainard, research director at the National Association of State Retirement Administrators and author of the annual Public Fund Survey report. The real problem arises when those payments create a fiscal crisis for the employer, he said. Some states have responded by requiring more contributions from employers and employees, increasing retirement ages, and even reducing benefits for new workers, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The debate over whether the public benefits are too generous also is occurring nationwide, especially with private companies dumping pension plans and offering 401(k) plans instead.

"This is a hot topic," said Jean-Pierre Aubry, a research associate with the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. "Nothing can be said definitely without a comprehensive comparison of total compensation between public and private employees is done."

For more details on Ohio's pension funds and the reform proposals recommended by the Ohio Retirement Study Council, go online to: <http://www.orsc.org>.

Armon, Rick. "State Struggles With Public Retirement Systems. Watchful Eye on Reform. Local Governments, workers wait to see how legislation plays out". Akron Beacon Journal. January 3, 2010. <http://www.ohio.com/news/80525212.html>