

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer released the following statement today expressing his deep concern for the Administration's budget proposal which guts funding for the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) program. The Bush Administration's budget request for Fiscal Year 2005 provides only \$44 million for the COPS program, \$712 million, or 87%, below the FY04 level, and also calls for eliminating the Universal Hiring Program.

"Just last week I joined the Calvert County Sheriffs Department to announce that they were awarded a \$500,000 COPS Law Enforcement Technology Grant in the major federal funding bill Congress passed at the beginning of this year. COPS funding, like this grant for Calvert County, has provided law enforcement officials serving our district with the real time equipment, technology, and personnel that they need to keep their departments running safely and efficiently. Since the creation of the COPS Program in 1994, I have joined the Congress in supporting the COPS program despite President Bush's recent and repeated attempts to eliminate its funding.

"The President's proposed cut of \$712 million - 87% - of the COPS program funding is a clear betrayal of the bipartisan commitment to the COPS program and shows a blatant disregard for the effectiveness of this program in equipping law enforcement with the best technology and the best equipment available.

"Not only has the budget drastically gutted funds for the COPS program, but the President's budget also eliminates the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, a grant program that provides anti-violence, anti-drug and crime prevention grants. This program was created by George H.W. Bush to honor Edward Byrne, a young NYC cop slain by a drug lord. At a 1988 event, then Vice President Bush accepted Byrne's badge from his father as a symbol of his commitment to law enforcement.

"Combined with cuts to the COPS program, **in total the Bush Administration budget cuts 36.5% of federal funding from grant programs that assist local law enforcement.** This is not the time for the federal government to turn its back on the first responders securing our nation by ignoring their needs and cutting funding to grant programs that directs federal funds straight to our local communities.

"The success of the COPS program is illustrated in the overwhelming evidence that it is a program that works, has effectively reduced crime, and is worthy of receiving federal support. Since 1994, \$53,736,919 in COPS grants have been awarded to law enforcement agencies in

my district.

“COPS grants have funded 887 additional police officers and sheriffs deputies to engage in community policing activities; 17 local and state law enforcement agencies have directly benefited from funding made available through COPS; \$7,779,758 has been awarded to add 63 school resource officers to improve safety for students, teachers, and administrators in primary and secondary schools throughout the 5th District; and \$15,381,520 has been awarded for crime-fighting technologies.

“This funding has allowed officers to spend more time on the streets of our district fighting and preventing crime through time-saving technology, information-sharing systems, and improved communications equipment.

“Last year, in his 2004 budget request, President Bush proposed an 83 percent cut in COPS funding, \$773 million below the fiscal year 2003 enacted level which would have eliminated the hiring grant, the most crucial and effective part of the COPS program. However, the bipartisan Congress rejected this funding cut and we’ve restored funds to maintain the hiring portion of the COPS program in the budget that the Congress passed last month. **I will work this year to again restore this funding and am hopeful that the Congress will remain committed to the COPS program.**”

Congressman Hoyer is a member of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, and has been a strong proponent of the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) program since its creation in 1994. The COPS program provides financial assistance to eligible police departments to help improve community policing efforts.

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