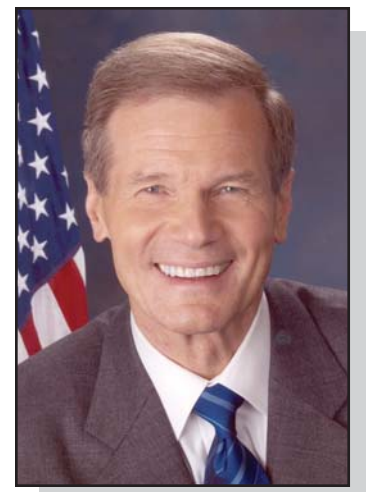


From Washington D. C.

Legislative News for PBA



*Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator*

Stimulus Package to Provide Significant Boost to Law Enforcement

We are living in perilous times. The economic crisis rippling through our country is leaving no one untouched. In response, the U.S. Senate currently is debating one of the most important pieces of legislation to come before it in a generation – an economic recovery package designed to jumpstart our economy and put Americans back to work. Essential to this national recovery is the need to provide states and local governments with financial assistance to cover huge budget shortfalls.

To make matters worse, these hard times have forced many states and municipalities to cut funding for law enforcement.

So it should come as no surprise that property crimes, including theft, burglary, larceny and auto theft, are on the rise in Florida for the first time in 16 years. And in some parts of the state, murders and other violent crimes have increased as well.

Faced with the stark reality of rising crime and shrinking resources, state and local governments need help from the federal government. To combat these cuts to law enforcement, the economic stimulus legislation will award a total of up to \$4 billion to struggling state and local law enforcement agencies, so that they have the resources necessary to protect public safety and keep law enforcement officers on the job and out of the unemployment lines.

The measure includes up to \$3 billion for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program, which gives grants to states and local governments for equipment purchases and operating costs. According to the Senate

Appropriations Committee, the stimulus package could provide state and local law enforcement in Florida as much as \$100 million in Byrne grant monies – a tenfold increase from last year. These grants have helped many law enforcement agencies fund vital prevention, education, drug treatment, and corrections programs, among others.

The stimulus bill will also provide \$1 billion for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program to hire about 13,000 new police officers over the next three years. The program has been proven to work—helping reduce crime rates in the 1990's to the lowest levels seen in a generation. Since 1994, COPS has put nearly 8,000

additional police officers on the streets in Florida. While I have long supported additional funding for the COPS program, the previous Administration took a different view and failed to provide full funding. While calls for more COPS funding went unheeded during the past eight years, I am confident that we will see a renewed commitment to the program from the Obama-Biden administration.

Meantime, as the crime rate begins to climb, passing a stimulus bill that provides a needed funding

boost to law enforcement could not come a moment too soon. Once that happens, I'm hopeful these measures will go a long way toward helping many Florida communities obtain the resources and law enforcement personnel they need to keep neighborhoods safe.

Bill Nelson is Florida's senior U.S. Senator and a member of the Senate's Finance, Commerce, Armed Services, Intelligence and Budget committees. ●

"...the economic stimulus legislation will award a total of up to \$4 billion to struggling state and local law enforcement agencies..."

I am proud to represent Floridians in the U.S. Senate, where one of my goals is to make sure our state receives its fair share of federal funds. These funds give our cities and communities the tools necessary to improve the quality of life for all Floridians. And as law enforcement now plays a greater role in the fight against terror, I understand the importance of making sure you receive adequate federal resources.

"A man may fail many times but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else."

~ J. Paul Getty

817.311 UNLAWFUL USE OF BADGES, ETC.

(1) (817.311 SS) From and after May 9, 1949, any person who shall wear or display a badge, button, insignia or other emblem, or shall use the name of or claim to be a member of any benevolent, fraternal, social, humane, or charitable organization, which organization is entitled to the exclusive use of such name and such badge, button, insignia or emblem either in the identical form or in such near resemblance thereto as to be a colorable imitation thereof, unless such person is entitled so to do under the laws, rules and regulations of such organization, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in S. 775.082 or S. 775.083.

(2) This section shall be cumulative to any and all laws now in force in the state.
Florida Statutes (1987).

PLEASE NOTE

843.085 Unlawful Use of police badges or other indicia of authority:

(1) Unless appointed by the Governor pursuant to chapter 354, authorized by the appropriate agency, or displayed in a closed or mounted case as a collection or exhibit, to wear or display any authorized indicia of authority, including any badge, insignia, emblem, identification card, or uniform, or any colorable imitation thereof, of any federal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency, or other criminal justice agency as now or hereafter defined in S. 943.045, which could deceive a reasonable person into believing that such item is authorized by any of the agencies described above for use by the person displaying or wearing it, or which displays in any manner or combination the word or words "police," "patrolman," "agent," "sheriff," "deputy," "trooper," "highway patrol," "Wildlife Officer," "Marine Patrol Officer," "state attorney," "public defender," "marshal," "constable," or "bailiff," which could deceive a reasonable person into believing that such item is authorized by any of the agencies described above for use by the person displaying or wearing it.

(2) To own or operate a motor vehicle marked or identified in any manner or combination by the word or words "police," (etc.) Or by any lettering, marking, or insignia, or colorable imitation thereof, including but not limited to, stars, badges, or shields, officially used to identify the vehicle as a federal, state, county or municipal law enforcement vehicle or a vehicle used by a criminal justice agency as now or hereafter defined in s. 943.045, which could deceive a reasonable person into believing that such vehicle is authorized by any of the agencies described above for use by the person operating the motor vehicle, unless such vehicle is owned or operated by the appropriate agency and its use is authorized by such agency, or the local law enforcement agency authorizes the use of such vehicle or unless the person is appointed by the Governor pursuant to chapter 354.

(3) To sell, transfer, or give away the authorized badge or colorable imitation thereof, including miniatures of any ...

(4) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL PROHIBIT A FRATERNAL, BENEVOLENT, OR LABOR ORGANIZATION OR ASSOCIATION, OR THEIR CHAPTERS OR SUBSIDIARIES, FROM USING THE FOLLOWING WORDS, IN ANY MANNER OR IN ANY COMBINATION, IF THOSE WORDS APPEAR IN THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE ORGANIZATIONS OR ASSOCIATIONS.

