



GRAND LODGE
FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

31 May 2006

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice
and Commerce and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice
and Commerce and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Representative Mollohan,

I am writing on behalf of the membership of the Fraternal Order of Police to express our strong support for the inclusion of language in the FY 2007 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies appropriations bill to prohibit disclosure of firearms trace data by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) firearms to non-law enforcement entities.

The F.O.P. has supported this language since the original version was first enacted several years ago because of our concern for the safety of law enforcement officers and the integrity of law enforcement investigations. For example, the disclosure of trace requests can inadvertently reveal the names of undercover officers or informants, endangering their safety. It may also tip off the target of an investigation, as appears to be the case in New York City. According to media reports earlier this month, law enforcement sources cited that as many as "four cases were compromised and an additional 14 were put at risk" by private investigators employed by the city who acted on the basis of trace data. In this case, the investigators conducted "sting" operations for the city's civil suit against several gun stores that had been identified through firearms trace data. As a result, several gun trafficking suspects under investigation by law enforcement changed their behavior to avoid scrutiny. This is exactly the type of interference that caused the F.O.P. to originally support this legislation.

While we recognize that court decisions have reduced the effectiveness of this provision by allowing disclosure of trace data in civil suits, we continue to believe that its inclusion is extremely important and, on behalf of our more than 324,000 members, we urge that it be included. Thank you in advance for considering our view on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Chuck Canterbury
National President

cc: The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable David R. Obey, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations

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