



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo: Increase COPS funding to enhance public safety in New York and beyond

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO July 29, 2021

| ISSUE: **COPS PROGRAM; LAW ENFORCEMENT; CRIME**

With a rise in crime in New York and across the nation, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, announced today that he has sent a letter to President Joseph Biden and congressional leaders asking that the federal government provide increased funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program.

The COPS program was established in 1994 with the passage of the Violent Criminal Control and Law Enforcement Act and is intended to enhance public safety through the implementation of community policing strategies. Since its implementation, the program has provided grants to more than 13,000 state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to fund the hiring and redeployment of more than 134,000 officers, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, which oversees the program.

While the COPS program initially received approximately \$1.4 billion in annual appropriations during the mid-to-late 1990s, it has received far less in the years since with \$386 million appropriated to the program for Fiscal Year 2021. President Biden has requested approximately \$651 million for the program in his Fiscal Year 2022 budget, which would be enough funding for about 2,500 new officers.

Sen. Griffo said that funding levels for the COPS program should be increased to address rising crime rates.

“Following a spike in crime across the country during the 1970s and 80s, the COPS program was established to put more police officers on the street and to provide local officials with important resources and tools to fight crime within their communities,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “As we see incidents of criminality rising once again nationwide, it is imperative that the federal government provide for increased funding for the COPS program, as it did in the 1990s, so that we can reverse this alarming trend now and ensure that our country does not return to where we were several decades ago when crime was rampant.”

The full text of Sen. Griffo’s letter to President Biden, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy is below:

July 27, 2021

President Joseph Biden

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Like so many others, I am troubled and concerned by the reported rise of crime in New York State and throughout the nation.

It is imperative that we seek out ways to try to reduce this alarming increase and ensure the safety of all Americans. One such mechanism to address this issue is to properly fund and/or increase funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. The program, which was part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton provided grant awards for the hiring or rehiring of police officers and former member of the armed services to engage in community policing and crime prevention and community policing training and related technology. As a result of the COPS program, 100,000 new law enforcement officers were on the street from 1995 to 1999.

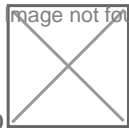
Despite Congress continuing to fund the COPS program, it is nowhere near the level of the mid-to-late 1990s where the program received approximately \$1.4 billion in annual appropriations. Most recently, the amount of funding allocated to the program was \$386 million for the 2021 Fiscal Year. This funding went towards several initiatives, including de-escalation training, improving police response to people with mental health problems, helping law enforcement agencies gain accreditation and anti-bias and diversity training. During the mid-2000s, there was no funding allocated for hiring initiatives.

It is my belief that we can fight crime and offer enhanced protections to our communities by increasing funding to the COPS program. Doing so would provide local governments with additional grant opportunities to hire law enforcement who are trained in and knowledgeable of effective community policing practices, techniques and strategies. As such, I urge you to consider immediate and increased funding for this program.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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Joseph A. Griffo

New York State Senator, 47th Senate District