



**HON. MICHAEL G. GRIMM
OF NEW YORK
STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD**

Mark Up of H.R. 365: The National Blue Alert Act of 2011
House Committee on the Judiciary
Wednesday, April 25, 2012

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Conyers, thank you for allowing me to submit a statement for the record today in support of my bill, H.R. 365, the "National Blue Alert Act of 2011." As a former FBI Special Agent it is a unique honor for me to have the House Committee on the Judiciary mark up this important legislation today.

During my career in the FBI I have witnessed firsthand the danger posed by criminals who attack law enforcement officers and the particular threat they have on our communities. Time and time again we have seen that if criminals are willing to attack a police officer to avoid apprehension there is no limit to the lengths they will go to or the victims they will target to avoid justice.

According to preliminary data from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 173 officers have been killed in the line of duty during 2011. This represents a 13 percent increase over the 153 officers killed in 2010 and an alarming 42 percent spike when compared to the 122 officers who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2009. In 2011 the primary cause of death was gunfire, which claimed the lives of 68 officers and nearly matched the decade-long high of 69 firearms-related deaths in 2007.

Further, when we take a look at the states that had officers killed in the line of duty in 2011, Florida led the nation with 14 fatalities, closely followed by Texas (13), New York (11), California (10) and Georgia (10). As members of Congress representing parts of New York City and Puerto Rico it is a sad fact for myself and my Colleague Congressman Pierluisi, who is the lead Co-Sponsor of this bill, that the New York City Police Department and Puerto Rico Police Department both lost four officers — the most officers of any agency in 2011.

While it is impossible to completely transform the hazardous nature of the work our law enforcement officers carry out every day, there are steps we can take to enhance their safety and quickly apprehend those who put them at risk.

The "National Blue Alert Act," does this by creating a national "Blue Alert" communications network within the U.S. Department of Justice to disseminate information on suspects who are being sought in connection with the death or injury of a law enforcement officer. Similar to the nationwide AMBER Alert system for missing children, the Blue Alert would rapidly notify law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public to help aid in the apprehension of these violent criminals.

Additionally, this program would further encourage the expansion of the Blue Alert program beyond the handful of states where it currently exists by helping to fund the development of Blue Alert plans, regional coordination, and the development and implementation of new technologies to improve Blue Alert communications. The bill also authorizes the use of existing COPS program funds to provide training and technical assistance to states, and therefore does not increase the cost to the federal government to carry out the program.

This legislation is supported by a number of law enforcement organizations including the Sergeant's Benevolent Association, Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the National Association of Police Officers and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association.

I am certain that the National Blue Alert Act will enhance the safety of our communities as well as the law enforcement officers who protect them, and I encourage its swift passage both here in the Judiciary Committee and in the full House of Representatives.

WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FROM

CONGRESSMAN DAVE REICHERT (WA-08)

BEFORE THE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP OF
H.R. 365, THE “NATIONAL BLUE ALERT ACT OF 2011”

APRIL 25, 2012

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Conyers, and my colleagues on the Committee – thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of H.R. 365, the *National Blue Alert Act*, introduced by Representative Michael Grimm of New York. As the former Sheriff of King County in Washington State and the current Co-Chair of the House Law Enforcement Caucus, I'm proud to cosponsor this legislation and to recognize the work of the nearly one million sworn law enforcement officers across the nation.

Law enforcement officers and their families understand the inherent dangers associated with their work, but humbly accept those risks in service to our nation. Despite the dangers they face, police officers selflessly give themselves to protecting our communities – every day they put on the badge, they put their life on the line for each one of us. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), there is an average of over 59,000 assaults against law enforcement officers each year, and an officer is killed in the line of duty every 53 hours in the United States. Moreover, there appears to be an upward trend in unprovoked, ambush attacks against law enforcement officers. Last year, the NLEOMF found that gun-related incidents were the cause of more line of duty deaths than traffic incidents for the first time in fourteen years.

Sadly, in Washington State our communities and police officers are too familiar with this trend and are not strangers to the pain of losing a partner or loved one. Consider recent tragedies in my home state:

- On October 29, 2009, an unprovoked, ambush attack claimed the life of Seattle Police Officer Timothy Brenton who was fatally shot while sitting in his cruiser. The gunman pulled up to Officer Brenton's squad car, opened fire, and sped off. Six days passed before the suspect was apprehended.
- On November 29, 2009, officers Tina Griswold, Ronald Owens, Greg Richards, and Sgt. Mark Renninger of the Lakewood Police Department were assassinated while they prepared for their shift at a local coffee shop. A lone gunman pulled up to the coffee shop and opened fire on the officers, killing all four.

- On January 1, 2012, U.S. Park Ranger Margaret Anderson was fatally shot while setting up a roadblock at Mt. Rainier National Park. The gunman was found the next morning; after dying of hypothermia hiding from authorities in Mt. Rainier National Park.
- On February 23, 2012, Washington State Patrol Trooper Tony Radulescu was fatally shot after pulling over a motorist in Gig Harbor, Washington. Many hours later, the suspect was located but took his own life before authorities could apprehend him.

When an officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, the minutes, hours, or days immediately following the incident are the most tense and dangerous not only for the fellow officers on the force but for the entire community. When suspects flee crime scenes, they pose serious threats to communities; they are often armed and very dangerous, and after killing a law enforcement officer, they may not hesitate to harm innocent bystanders as well. The ability to quickly locate and apprehend a suspect is critical to restoring order and ensuring the safety of the community.

Modeled after the successful federal AMBER Alert program, H.R. 365 will help states create a “Blue Alert” system to quickly disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is fatally injured or killed in the line of duty. Blue Alerts would be issued when a suspect has not been apprehended and poses a serious threat to the community. While a handful of states, including Washington State, have already taken the initiative to develop state-level Blue Alert systems, the federal government can help encourage more states in this effort. H.R. 365 will create a national voluntary Blue Alert program within the Department of Justice and designate a national coordinator responsible for disseminating best practices, voluntary guidelines, and protocols for suspect apprehension to help guide states in the development of their Blue Alert systems. The bill also authorizes the use of existing COPS program funds to provide training and technical assistance to states, and therefore does not increase costs to the federal government to carry out the program.

Establishment of Blue Alert systems throughout the United States will help facilitate the timely apprehension of those suspected of seriously injuring or killing a law enforcement officer. For example, the attacks against the officers from Washington State that I discussed likely would have triggered a Blue Alert had the system been in place at the time. If a Blue Alert had gone out, citizens may have

been able to provide more timely tips to authorities about a given suspect's whereabouts, and police may have apprehended the gunman faster. Most importantly, the Blue Alert would have given the entire public safety community the information necessary to protect themselves and prepare for the next encounter with the potentially violent suspect, once located.

I would like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for their support in bringing this important legislation forward for a vote in the Committee. The *National Blue Alert Act* will go a long way toward protecting our communities and keeping all Americans safe. Working in partnership with the states, the federal government can help facilitate the creation of Blue Alert systems across the nation so when tragedy strikes, the public is on notice, and suspects are more quickly apprehended and brought to justice before they are able to cause additional harm to themselves or others.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today in support of H.R. 365; I encourage all of my colleagues on the Committee to recognize the work of our federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers and vote for passage of this vital legislation.



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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Michael G. Grimm
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, DC 20510

20 January 2011

Dear Representative Grimm,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for legislation entitled the "National Blue Alert Act."

This legislation, crafted by the Fraternal Order of Police and staff in the office of Representative Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), was introduced very late in the Second Session of the 111th Congress and was not acted on prior to adjournment. This year, we are working with Rep. Hoyer to get the bill introduced again and welcome your strong interest in the legislation.

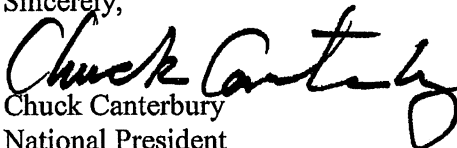
The FOP is seeking broad and bipartisan support for this legislation and, to that end, are working with Senators Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) and Lindsey O. Graham (R-SC), both members of the Judiciary Committee, to reintroduce the bill in the Senate.

As a former law enforcement officer, you understand better than most Members of Congress, the day-to-day realities of law enforcement work and the dangers that these brave men and women face everyday. Like you, we believe that a nationwide system to swiftly disseminate information about a suspect involved in killing or severely injuring a law enforcement officers will enhance efforts to capture these most vicious of criminals more quickly.

This "Blue Alert" system would build on the success of the Amber Alert system by using existing communication networks to provide information to the public and other law enforcement officers in the crucial time following an incident in which an officer goes missing, is killed, or severely injured. To accomplish this goal, the legislation we helped to write would establish allow the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in the U.S. Department of Justice to administer grants for up to \$10 million to States to help them establish or upgrade a "Blue Alert" system.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you for your support and interest in this legislation. I look forward to working with you on this bill and on other issues in this Congress. If I can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

7 February 2011

The Honorable Michael G. Grimm
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Grimm,

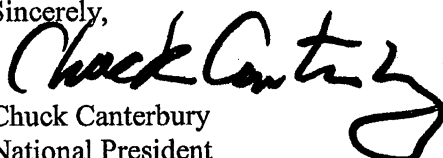
I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for H.R. 365, the "National Blue Alert Act," which will establish a "National Blue Alert" system for the local, regional and national dissemination of time-sensitive information to help identify a suspect in the event that a law enforcement officer goes missing, is severely injured or is killed in the line of duty.

This legislation, which was conceived and developed by the Fraternal Order of Police along with your predecessor, former Representative Michael E. McMahon (D-NY), as well as Representative Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), is very important to our membership. In the Senate, we are working with two members of the Committee on the Judiciary—Senators Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) and Lindsey O. Graham (R-SC)—in a bipartisan way to generate broad support for the measure. We hope to be able to help you build bipartisan support on H.R. 365 in this Congress and we urge you to work with veteran lawmakers on the House Judiciary Committee from both sides of the aisle.

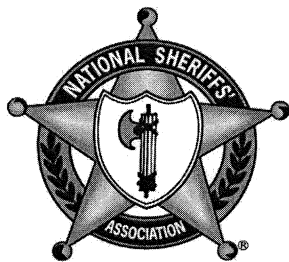
The "Blue Alert" system, which has been adopted in several States, would mirror the current "Amber Alert" system by using existing communications networks to immediately disseminate sensitive information to appropriate law enforcement, other agencies, and the public when an officer goes missing, is severely injured or is killed in the line of duty. Specifically, this bill would authorize \$10 million through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) in the U.S. Department of Justice to encourage, enhance, integrate, and improve "Blue Alert" plans through a system of training and support for State and local law enforcement units.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you for your support and interest in this legislation. I look forward to working with you on this bill and on other issues in this Congress. If I can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President

—BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION—



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

February 15, 2011

The Honorable Michael Grimm
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grimm:

On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), I am writing to express our support for the National Blue Alert Act of 2011 (H.R. 365).

Every year, federal, state and local law enforcement officers are killed or severely injured in the line of duty. In most states, there is currently no system to transmit information to the public on suspects after law enforcement officers have been seriously injured or killed. Unfortunately, this gives an opportunity for the suspects to avoid apprehension for days, and in some cases months and years.

A national Blue Alert system would be designed to be compatible with the successful Amber Alert systems already in place nationwide. H.R. 365 enables the Attorney General to establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice (DOJ) to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. Additionally, the bill establishes a national coordinator of the Blue Alert communications network within the DOJ, who will be tasked with encouraging states and local governments to develop additional Blue Alert plans; establishing voluntary guidelines for states and local governments to use in developing such plans; developing protocols for efforts to apprehend suspects; and establishing an advisory group to assist states, local governments, law enforcement agencies, and other entities in initiating, facilitating, and promoting Blue Alert plans.

Currently, multiple states have successful variations of the Blue Alert, and though other states are slowly seeing the benefits of implementing this type of system, the lack of a nationally linked system allows for suspects to avoid apprehension by escaping to another state. The National Sheriffs Association believes that the ability to implement a national Blue Alert system will greatly help in the swift apprehension of suspects involved in officers' injuries or deaths and supports National Blue Alert Act of 2011 (H.R. 365).

Sincerely,

Sheriff B.J. Roberts
President

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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RASHEED TAHIR

General Counsel

LAWRENCE BERGER, ESQ.

Public Information Officer

JENNIFER MATTINGLEY

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers Jr.,

I am writing on behalf of the more than 26,000 members of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 365, the "National Blue Alert Act of 2012," offered by Rep. Michael Grimm (R-NY). FLEOA sincerely appreciates the Committee scheduling this important bill for a mark-up on April 25, 2012.

This legislation is introduced to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. The term "Blue Alert" means the plan of a State, unit of local government or Federal agency participating in the network for the dissemination of information received as a Blue Alert.

H.R. 365 would provide valuable, timely and location specific information regarding the serious injury and/or line of duty death of a law enforcement officer. As you know, time is of the essence in these situations and this Bill would be instrumental of finding, arresting and bringing to justice those who injure or kill members of law enforcement.

This bill maintains the anonymity of the law enforcement officer involved while providing valuable information on suspect(s) involved on a multi-jurisdictional network that provides seamless communication of the "Blue Alert". This is a successful concept first introduced with missing children through "Amber Alert", and is a logical progression to aid law enforcement officers by incorporating the citizenry to aide in apprehension of wanted persons without subjecting them to harm. Additionally, this will alert members of our society of dangerous individuals that may be in their local area.

H.R.365, the "National Blue Alert Act of 2012" is legislation that both empowers and protects our citizens by alerting them of dangerous criminals and enabling to assist law enforcement with any pertinent information they may have regarding a criminal element in their local area.

On behalf of the membership of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, thank you for your attention to our concerns. Please do not hesitate

to contact FLEOA President Jon Adler (Jadler@fleoa.org) or me, if we can provide you with any additional information or assistance.

Respectfully,

Frank Terreri
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA)
National Vice President for Legislative Affairs
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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

EDWARD D. MULLINS

April 23, 2012

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 11,000 members of the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department to thank you for scheduling the April 25, 2012 mark-up of H.R. 365, the "National Blue Alert Act," which was recently endorsed by the leaders of the House Law Enforcement Caucus. We respectfully urge the Committee to advance this bill so that it may be considered by the House of Representatives at the earliest possible opportunity.

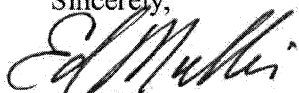
As you know, law enforcement is an extremely dangerous profession. According to preliminary data from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, in 2011 there were 173 Federal, State and local law enforcement officers who fell in the line of duty. This represents a 13 percent increase from 2010. The criminals who attack law enforcement officers pose a particular threat to our communities insofar as their aggression against police officers demonstrates that there are no limits to the range of targets against which they will direct their lawless violence.

While there is little we can do to completely transform the hazardous nature of law enforcement work, there are measures we can take to enhance officer safety and to more quickly apprehend those who mean us harm. The "National Blue Alert Act," does just that by creating a national "Blue Alert" communications network within the U.S. Department of Justice to disseminate information on suspects who are being sought in connection with the death or injury of a law enforcement officer. Similar to the nationwide AMBER Alert system for missing children, the Blue Alert would rapidly notify law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public to help aid in the apprehension of these violent criminals. In these times of tight state and local budgets, the bill creates a grant program to further encourage the expansion of the Blue Alert program beyond the handful of states where it currently exists by helping to fund the development of Blue Alert plans, regional coordination, and the development and implementation of new technologies to improve Blue Alert communications. Simply put, this legislation will enhance the safety of our communities and the law enforcement officers who protect them.



On behalf of the membership of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, thank you for your support of law enforcement and for your support of H.R. 365. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or our Washington Representatives, Andrew Siff and Chris Granberg, at (202) 457 - 7756, if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ed Mullins".

Ed Mullins
President