



H.R. 1700 - COPS Improvements Act of 2007

Floor Situation

H.R. 1700 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Anthony Weiner (D-NY) on March 26, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, as amended, by voice vote, on May 2, 2007.

H.R. 1700 is expected to be considered on the floor on May 15, 2007.

**Note: The COPS program was last reauthorized by the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109 -162), which passed the House by a vote of 415 – 4, on September 28, 2005.*

Summary

H.R. 1700:

Authorization of funds

- Authorizes an increase from \$1.047 billion to \$1.15 billion annually from 2008 through 2013 for the COPS programs.

**Note: CBO estimates that “assuming the appropriation of authorized amounts, state, local, and tribal governments would receive about \$4.5 billion over the 2008-2012 period.”*

New Authority for the Attorney General

- Expands the Attorney General’s authority to make grants and carry out public safety and community policing programs.
- Gives the Attorney General the authority to determine whether state or local agencies have supplanted federal funds through the COPS program to replace funds that would have otherwise been spent from local resources.

New Grant Programs & Program Requirements

- Gives the COPS program exclusive authority to administer COPS grants.

**Note: Currently at the Department of Justice (DOJ), both the COPS program office and the office of Justice Programs (OJP) share management responsibility for some COPS funds and the administration of COPS programs.*

- Establishes a grant program to train police officers in anti-terrorism, intelligence, and homeland security duties.
- Establishes a grant program to hire school resource officers to combat crime, gang, and drug activities in and around schools.
- Establishes grants to “implement innovative programs” to combat drug use, distribution, and manufacturing, and to establish criminal gang enforcement task forces.
- Creates a “Troops to COPS” program, which awards grants to hire former members of the Armed Services as career law enforcement officers, and gives preferences to communities that are adversely affected by a recent military base closing.
- Authorizes a “Community Prosecutors Program” to provide funds for the Attorney General to assign prosecutors to handle cases from specific geographic areas and problems in the areas of counter-terrorism and violent crime.
- Authorizes a “Technology Grants Program,” which provides funds to develop and use new technologies and to assist law enforcement in shifting “from reacting to crime to preventing crime.”
- Requires that grants made under the COPS programs are divided in the following separate accounts:
 - Community Policing and Crime Prevention;
 - Troops to Cops Program;
 - Community Prosecutors Program; and,
 - Technology Grants.
- Eliminates the requirement that the federal share of hiring grants decrease during the course of the grant.
- Eliminates the preferential treatment for grant recipients who agree to contribute more than the minimum 25 percent of hiring grants.
- Requires that officers hired with funds from COPS grants must be retained for at least one year after the grant money expires.

- Establishes that grants may be renewed indefinitely to provide additional funds, except that grants for hiring and rehiring career law enforcement officers may be renewed up to 5 years.
- Eliminates the \$75,000 cap for hiring officers.
- Increases the amount of the grant funding that recipients may use for “technical assistance” from 3 percent to 5 percent.

Studies

- Requires the Attorney General to provide for a study of the effectiveness of the COPS programs in reducing crime that shall report to Congress within four years of enactment of this legislation.
- Requires the Inspector General to conduct a study, using random sampling techniques, on the effectiveness of the “COPS on the Beat” program in reducing rates of violent crime, drug offenses, and other crimes. The study shall also report on the level to which state and local law enforcement are contributing funds to the program, and on any waste, fraud, or abuse. The Inspector General shall report their findings to Congress within 180 days of enactment of this legislation.

Background

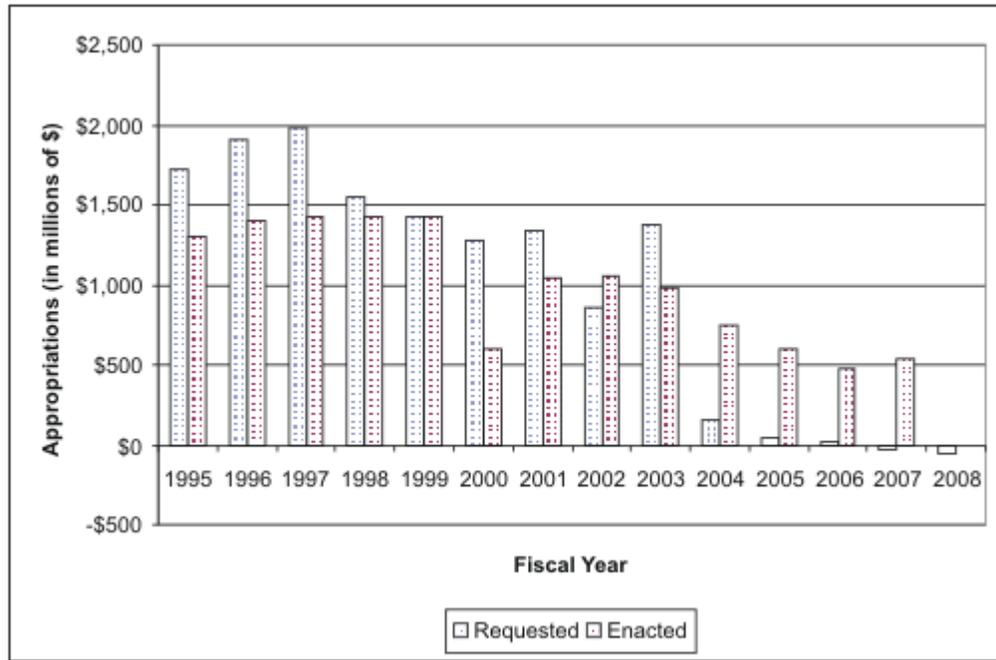
The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program was established within the Department of Justice (DOJ) in the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322). The mission of the COPS program is “to advance the practice of community policing as an effective strategy in communities’ efforts to improve public safety.” The COPS program provides grants to tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies for a broad range of programs including: acquiring new technologies, developing and testing new policing strategies, and hiring and training law enforcement professionals. According to the COPS Office, it has awarded more than \$11.4 billion to over 13,000 law enforcement agencies across the United States since it started awarding grants in 1994.

The 1994 COPS program authorization expired in 2000, but Congress continued to appropriate funding for it until it was reauthorized in 2005 in the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109 -162). The 2005 COPS reauthorization consolidated the multiple COPS grant programs into a single grant program, allowing states and localities to apply to just one grant program and use the funds for both hiring officers and to fund non-hiring programs.

H.R. 1700, if enacted, will change COPS from a single-grant program back to a multi-grant program. H.R. 1700 will also expand the scope of the COPS programs by expanding the program purpose areas by adding: school resource officers, illegal drug programs, and hiring officers to perform homeland security duties. H.R. 1700 will also

create new grant programs to include the Troops-to-Cops Program, the Community Prosecutors Program, and the Technology Grants program.

Below is a graph comparing enacted levels of funding for the COPS program with the levels of funding the Administration requested for FY1995 – FY2008:



Source: CRS presentation of the Administration's budget requests for the respective years and data provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Congressional Affairs Office. (CRS: [RL33308](#))

Cost

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that enacting H.R. 1700 would cost \$1.5 billion over the next five years, “with additional amounts spent in the years after 2012,” assuming the appropriation of the authorized amounts. H.R. 1700 would also increase the authorization level for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 and would authorize funding for fiscal years 2010 through 2013. Assuming the appropriation of authorized amounts, state, local, and tribal governments would receive about \$4.5 billion over the 2008-2012 period. Any costs to those governments would be incurred voluntarily as a condition of receiving funding.

Staff Contact

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