



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
Floor Statement as Prepared for Delivery
H.R. 1550, the *Federal Law Enforcement Personnel and Resources Allocation Improvement Act*
of 2012
July 31, 2012

Thank you, Ranking Member Scott.

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Lamar Smith, for supporting H.R. 1550 and for working with House leadership to schedule the bill for floor consideration. I also want to thank the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, Congressman Conyers; the Chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, Congressman Sensenbrenner; and the Ranking Member of the Crime Subcommittee, Congressman Scott, for their support. H.R. 1550 was unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee, and has been endorsed by the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, which represents over 25,000 federal law enforcement officers employed by 65 agencies.

The short title of this bill, as modified, is the *Federal Law Enforcement Personnel and Resources Allocation Improvement Act of 2012*. The bill would direct the Department of Justice, when allocating law enforcement personnel and resources among U.S. jurisdictions, to give priority to those areas of the country that have high rates of homicide and other violent crime, including forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

The bill would require the Attorney General to designate an existing official within the Department of Justice who will be responsible for developing practices and procedures to implement this directive, and for monitoring compliance with the directive by the Department's component agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the United States Marshals Service.

Finally, the bill would require the Attorney General to submit an annual report to the appropriate congressional committees. The report would specify which jurisdictions have a high incidence of homicide or other violent crime, and would identify the steps that the Department of Justice is taking to prioritize the allocation of law enforcement personnel and resources to those high-crime areas. In addition, the report would describe the methodology that the Department is using to determine the total number of authorized federal law enforcement positions nationwide, to allocate those authorized positions among different jurisdictions, and to assign personnel to fill those authorized positions.

The basis for H.R. 1550 is as follows. In recent years, the number of murders and other violent crimes nationwide has decreased substantially. Between 2007 and 2011, for example, the total number of murders in the United States decreased by over 20 percent and the total number of violent crimes decreased by nearly 18 percent. Most U.S. jurisdictions—whether urban, suburban, or rural—have experienced a meaningful reduction in murders and other violent crimes. From the macro perspective, the progress we have witnessed has been real and, in many cases, remarkable. Much of the credit is due to law enforcement officers on the federal and local

levels. Enhanced and effective policing can make—and has made—a tremendous difference in our communities.

Unfortunately, certain jurisdictions—sometimes referred to as “hot spots”—have been exceptions to this steady downward trend in violent crime. My own district, Puerto Rico, is a case in point. Today, the number of annual murders in Puerto Rico is nearly 90 percent higher than it was in 1990. Between 2007 and 2011 alone, homicides rose by 55 percent, with most of the violence linked to the drug trade. Yet, the federal law enforcement footprint in the U.S. territory has not evolved in light of these changed circumstances. Instead, it has remained stagnant.

Puerto Rico may be the most dramatic example of a U.S. jurisdiction where violent crime has increased rather than decreased, but it is by no means alone. For example, Flint, Michigan experienced a 73 percent increase in homicides between 2007 and 2011, while a major metropolitan area in the Central Valley of California witnessed a 100 percent increase in murders.

Moreover, there are numerous other areas where there has been some progress in reducing crime, but where violence remains far too high. Examples of such areas include Detroit, St. Louis, Memphis, Oakland, Little Rock, Birmingham, Atlanta, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, Miami, and New Orleans.

H.R. 1550 would promote and institutionalize steps that the Department of Justice, to its credit, has already begun to take. Recently, the Department developed a new initiative—known as the “Violent Crime Reduction Partnership”—to help target federal resources to areas in need of additional law enforcement support. Pursuant to this initiative, for example, more than 50 officials from the FBI, the DEA, the ATF, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and the DOJ’s Criminal Division have begun a four-month “surge” of federal law enforcement resources in order to prevent and combat violent crime in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. This is a positive step that should be encouraged and replicated in other high-crime jurisdictions, which is the precise result that H.R. 1550 seeks to bring about.

To be clear: it is well understood that the methods that DOJ may successfully employ to reduce violent crime in, say, Philadelphia or Baltimore, may need to be adjusted for use in, say, San Juan or St. Louis—with the specific approach dependent upon the nature of the crime problem that each jurisdiction confronts and other relevant factors.

For that reason, my bill does not in any way try to micromanage the Department or to promote a one-size-fits-all approach to fighting crime. H.R. 1550 simply seeks to ensure, in this time of fiscal constraint on both the federal and local levels, that DOJ has in place a carefully-crafted and consistently-applied policy of allocating limited law enforcement personnel and resources to those areas where they are needed the most.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.