



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
Floor Statement as Prepared for Delivery
H.R. 5326, The *Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2013*
Statement in Support of Grimm-Pierluisi-Pascrell-King (NY) Amendment Regarding COPS
May 9, 2012

Mr. Chairman:

Along with my colleagues Mr. Grimm, a former FBI agent; Mr. Pascrell, the co-chair of the Law Enforcement Caucus; and Mr. King, the Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, I am offering this bipartisan amendment to increase funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services hiring program in order to bring such funding in line with the Fiscal Year 2012 enacted level of \$166 million dollars. The base bill provides only \$40 million dollars for this program, which is clearly not adequate. \$40 million dollars is \$122 million dollars below the FY12 enacted level, over \$217 million below the President's request, and \$175 million below the amount proposed by the Senate companion bill.

The COPS program was created by Title I of the *Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*. I was Attorney General of Puerto Rico at that time and I am proud to have worked with my fellow AGs to help secure passage of that bill. As someone whose own family has been deeply touched by violent crime, and who has spent countless hours talking with families that have been similarly affected, I am unyielding in my belief that the most solemn duty a government owes to its citizens is the right to personal security. Whether you live in Staten

Island, South Orange or San Juan, you deserve to feel safe in your home and in your community. The COPS program is rooted in this simple premise and has done much to make it a reality.

The mission of the COPS program is to enhance the security of our citizens. Under the program, the federal government awards grants to state and local law enforcement agencies so they can hire and train police officers, purchase and use new crime-fighting technologies, and develop innovative policing strategies.

To date, over \$160 million in COPS grants have been awarded to law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico, which—unfortunately—has the highest homicide rate in the country. These grants have put more than 3,500 new police officers on Puerto Rico's streets. Over \$6 million dollars have gone to improve safety for students and teachers in the Island's schools. About \$9 million dollars have been awarded for crime-fighting technology. Nearly every one of Puerto Rico's 78 municipalities has benefitted from COPS grants.

Every one of my colleagues could no doubt cite similar statistics. But even these numbers cannot adequately capture the impact that COPS funding has had in the communities we represent. The numbers of lives saved, the number of crimes prevented, and the number of families spared the pain of losing a loved one—these numbers are simply beyond calculation.

To increase funding for the COPS hiring program by \$122 million dollars, our amendment reduces funding for the NASA cross-agency support account by an equivalent amount. In the Fiscal Year 2010 cycle, the House, in a strong bipartisan vote of 228 to 203, adopted an amendment that followed this same approach.

I respectfully urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan Grimm-Pierluisi-King-Pascrell amendment and I yield back the balance of my time.

