April 5, 2023

Representative Don Bacon

U.S. House of Representatives

1024 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bacon,

On behalf of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), I am writing to express our support for the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) Reform Act (H.R. 324).

As you are aware, in 2004, Congress passed the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act, a bill to ensure that police officers could cross state lines with their firearms. Prior to the passage of this law, a police officer traveling from their home state across the border to an adjoining state could find themselves in violation of criminal law because they did not have a permit to carry their firearm in that state. Understanding this put police officers in a difficult situation, Congress moved swiftly to pass a law stating that officers did not need firearm licenses in states outside their own.

Since the original passage of LEOSA, many states have undertaken changes to their gun laws which have again placed police officers in jeopardy. Several states have passed statutes limiting magazine capacity. Many police officers have been issued and authorized to use magazines that carry more than 10 rounds of ammunition (typically, just a few more rounds than 10), but this can put officers in legal jeopardy.

And some states, New York most recently, have passed laws stating that firearms could not be carried in "sensitive areas" or "restricted places," even by people who possessed licenses allowing them to carry a firearm. Examples of these sensitive places include parks, playgrounds, buses, trains, restaurants, and theaters. Many of these places are places where mass shootings have occurred that could easily have been averted had an armed officer been present. Again, the LEOSA statute does not protect police officers in these situations. And there are other places where police officers may not currently carry firearms, such as national parks, in spite of the LEOSA act passed by Congress.

We applaud you for introducing the LEOSA Reform Act to amend existing law to ensure that officers are able to carry in the same venues as civilian concealed carry permit holders, and to also extend the exemption to magazine capacity and would allow active and retired law enforcement officers to access services in U.S. Post Offices, Social Security Administration offices, Veterans Affairs offices, and other Federal facilities without disarming or securing their firearms elsewhere.

No police chief wants to receive a telephone call from one of their officers that the officer is in custody in another state because that officer was carrying the firearm, magazine and ammunition that the chief has issued or authorized, simply because state laws unpredictably shift at every border.

As you know, this legislation would not increase the number of officers who carry firearms under the current LEOSA statute. This bill simply prevents any confusion between state and federal laws, by closing any loopholes that would prevent an officer from accidentally putting themselves in legal jeopardy.

I would like to thank you for your continuing commitment to enhancing public safety. The IACP stands ready to assist you as we continue to work together to advance the LEOSA Reform Act and work on issues important to policing and our communities.

Sincerely,



John W. Letteney

IACP President