

I rise in support of this important public safety legislation.

The Community Oriented Policing Services, or COPS, program is one of the most successful law enforcement support programs ever initiated by the federal government.

As the National Association of Police Organizations noted in their April 21 letter to me on this bill, "With the support of the COPS Program, community policing has been a dominant force behind the dramatic reduction in crime this nation has witnessed over the past 13 years." It's also clear that our communities are desperate to see this program properly funded, after eight years of neglect.

NAPO noted in their letter to me that in the last month, the COPS Program office received over 7,200 applications for the COPS Hiring Recovery Program (CHRP) grant funding contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the "stimulus bill." Those 7,200 applications amounted to a request for funds to hire 40,000 more officers nationwide. Yet the \$1 billion CHRP contained in the stimulus bill would allow local communities to hire only 5,000 to 6,000 new police. For New Jersey, previous COPS funding has meant an additional 628 police officers and/or sheriff deputies were walking the beat in the local communities of my Congressional district. Further, 33 school resource officers were hired to ensure that our children's schools are safe. H.R. 1139 would raise the CHRP authorization level to \$1.25 billion, allowing state and local law enforcement to hire more officers. Based on historical funding data, this bill would allow New Jersey alone to hire more than 2,000 additional police, and those would be welcome reinforcements for our current law enforcement officers who are working to improve the quality of life in communities across New Jersey.

This is a good and much needed bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.