



AFSCME's Public Safety Legislative Wins in the 117th Congress (2021-2022)

- **The Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022:** Expands the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officer Benefit program (PSOB) to include coverage for officers who are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress or acute stress disorder including officers who have contacted employee assistance programs for mental health assistance or have died by suicide from exposure to a traumatic event they encounter while on duty. This bill passed Congress with AFSCME support and was signed into law in August 2022.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Law Enforcement Training Act:** Authorizes and provides funding for training and best practices for first responders and public safety officers to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of an individual in crisis due to a TBI or repeated exposure to traumatic events. The bill also requires a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study on the prevalence and incidence of concussion among first responders.

Both the Public Safety Officer Support Act ([P.L. 117-172](#)) and TBI and PTSD Law Enforcement Training Act ([P.L. 117-170](#)) were bipartisan bills that had strong AFSCME support and were signed into law by President Biden in August 2022.

- **Retirement Fairness for Corrections Officers and Forensic Security Employees:** Within the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 an amendment was included that eliminates the 10% federal tax penalty on state and local Corrections Officers and Forensic Security Employees' retirement plan withdrawals taken after retiring from, or otherwise leaving their job, as early as age 50. Effective Dec. 29, 2022, this law ([P.L. 117-328](#)) now provides equal treatment for other public safety officers who were already exempt from the tax penalty.

AFSCME continues to be a leading voice on Capitol Hill and will continue to advocate for funding and benefits to be equal for all public safety officers.

- **Increased Funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program:** The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Byrne-JAG program is the country's leading source of federal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions. Designed to provide flexible funding to address a jurisdiction's most pressing public safety challenges, it can be used for staffing issues, training and equipment, and to enhance

rehabilitative programs in police, corrections and other criminal justice agencies/departments. In fiscal year (FY) 2023 Byrne-JAG was increased by \$96.3 million dollars for a total of \$771 million in dedicated funding.

- **Increased Funding for COPS, COPS Hiring, COPS Improvements:** DOJ's primary programs to award state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train law enforcement officers to participate in community policing, purchase and deploy new crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test new and innovative policing strategies. The COPS programs received a \$150.8 million increase for a total of \$663 million.
- **Full Funding for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grants Program:** The critical DOJ program that provides up to 50% of the cost of armored vests for state, local and tribal jurisdictions public safety officers. In FY 2023, the program was fully funded at \$30 million.

During the 117th Congress, AFSCME strongly advocated for full and increased funding to these vital public safety programs.

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AFSCME's 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.