

**UNITED STATES SENATE
Budget Committee Hearing**

Testimony on “Federal Support to Local Law Enforcement Agencies”

**Submitted by:
Sheriff Paul D. Laney
Cass County, North Dakota
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Each year the demands on local law enforcement agencies grow. As we enter a time when we are asked to become more involved in all aspects of society, we are also seeing proposed cutbacks in our support from the federal government.

As the protectors of our communities, we are committed to doing whatever it takes to keep our citizens safe. We have law enforcement officers in schools; we are involved in senior programs, neighborhood watch programs, drug awareness programs, youth programs, leadership programs, drug courts and a myriad of safety awareness programs to include Drug Interdictions, Remove Alcohol Impaired Drivers, Seatbelt Blitzes, etc.

We also provide law enforcement officers to federal programs such as the Drug Enforcement Administrations (DEA) Drug Task Force and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).

With all of these programs, we are also asked to step up to the plate and take on larger roles in Homeland Security. We are active in development of Buffer Zone Protection Plans (BZPP) for local businesses designated as potential terrorist targets. We develop

training and are active in preparing for terrorist attacks on our infrastructure. We are also developing action plans to deal with security at Points of Dispensing (PODS) for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Strategic National Stockpile through the City Readiness Initiative (CRI).

We do all of this while also providing critical members of our agencies to National Guard units who are regularly being called up and deployed. This puts a strain on our abilities to meet our everyday service needs, much less support the requests put on us from the state and federal government.

The support we receive from the federal government is critical to our success in all of the above mentioned programs. The following federal grant programs assist us daily in serving our communities.

- Byrne/JAG grants- Allow us to participate in Drug Task Forces that attack the ever growing and changing methamphetamine problem. In Cass County we recently used grant funds to purchase a K9 to assist us in our drug interdiction efforts.
- COPS Grants- The COPS grants have allowed so many law enforcement agencies to add additional personnel and to meet the demands placed upon us. It has put more law enforcement officers on the streets, in the schools and on state and

federal task forces, while allowing local governments the ability to budget over a period of time for the additional personnel.

Here in Cass County we have benefited from the direct federal funding programs.

Because of the COPS grants, we have been able to place cameras in rural schools where they didn't have cameras and upgrade and enhance systems that already existed. We have a state of the art Radio Interoperability system that allows us to talk with all area emergency responders, and we will soon have a state of the art CAD/RMS system that will enhance our regional dispatch center immensely. As you can see, direct federal funding has made all of this possible.

Local law enforcement has always stepped up when called upon to meet the needs of our citizens. We do more with less on a consistent basis. Our funding from the federal government is critical to meet the ever growing expectations placed upon us by the federal government, as well as meeting the needs of our people. It's a partnership established over the years; the federal government working with local emergency responders. Let's keep that partnership intact.