



Pegasus Report

A Publication of the Pegasus Research Foundation

March 2006

Volume 2, Issue # 3

Lee Colwell, President
Pegasus Research Foundation
1501 Macon Dr, Ste 100
Little Rock, AR 72211
icolwell@pegasusresearch.org
Pegasus Advisory Board
Sheriff Tommy Ferrell (Ret.),
Chairman
1 Pecanway
Natchez, MS 39120
601-442-0134
tferrell@telepax.net
Pegasus Support Center
1230 Support Center
Jackson, MS 39204
800-392-4312
information@pegasusresearch.org

Current Report

- **Special Focus Issue:
Congress Considers the
FY07 Crime Budget**

Special Focus Issue: Congress Considers the FY07 Crime Budget

In the face of dwindling Federal resources and large budget demands prompted by homeland security concerns, the Administration has proposed its FY2007 Budget.

Local Law Enforcement's Response

The Administration's Budget proposal has been met with rancor by many law enforcement leaders. Decrying a dramatic reduction in Federal support for local law enforcement, and appealing to Congress for support, the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and others representing local law enforcement have expressed grave concerns about the proposed Budget. IACP's President has warned that "These cuts have the potential to cripple the capabilities of law enforcement agencies nationwide and will undoubtedly force many departments to take officers off the streets, leading to more crime and violence in our hometowns and ultimately less security for our homeland."

Congressional Response

Many in Congress have long understood the national interest in Federal support for local law enforcement, and have taken action in response. In the House of Representatives, **Cong. Frank Wolf (R-VA)**, Chairman of the powerful House Science-State-Justice Appropriations Subcommittee, for example, is fighting for a nationwide anti-gang program, a key local law enforcement concern, an effort which brings together federal, state and local law enforcement in addition to social service providers. Cong. Wolf, in his leadership role, is supported by many House Members like **Cong. Marion Berry (D-AR)**, who has been a strong supporter of Federal funding for the COPS Program and **Cong. Vic Snyder (D-AR)**, who brings his medical perspective to law enforcement's fight to stem the plague of illegal drugs.

In the Senate, **Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS)**, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and **Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV)**, Ranking Member, along with **Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL)**, Chairman of the Senate Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Subcommittee, and **Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)**, Ranking Member, are all very strong long-time supporters of local law enforcement.

Pegasus Advisory Board

Sheriff (Retired) Tommy Ferrell

Chairman,
Adams County, Mississippi

Sheriff William F. Balkwill
Sarasota County, Florida

Sheriff Ted G. Kamatchus
Marshall County, Iowa

Sheriff Craig Webre
Lafourche Parish, Louisiana

Sheriff George H. Payne
Harrison County, Mississippi

Sheriff James Lee Foster
Newberry County, South Carolina

Sheriff Herman Young
Fairfield County, South Carolina

In March, **Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA)** and **Sen. Mark Dayton (D-MN)**, with support from co-sponsors **Sens. Jim Talent (R-MO), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Debbie A. Stabenow (D-MI), Barack Obama (D-IL), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Carl Levin (D-MI), Herb Kohl (D-WI), John Kerry (D-MA), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Ken Salazar (D-CO) and Max Baucus (D-MT)**, co-authored Amendment No. 3018 to the Senate's FY2007 Budget Resolution to restore funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program to 2003 levels (\$900 Million). Sen. Chambliss noted, "Over the past few years, funding for our federal law enforcement grant programs have been reduced significantly. This is all despite the fact that state and local law enforcement have had to respond to increased homeland security costs"

A Historical Perspective

Historically, at the end of the day, Congress has always been very supportive of local law enforcement. While it is the role of the Administration to propose Federal spending priorities in a proposed Budget, it is Congress' responsibility to make budget and appropriations decisions based on Members' reading of their constituents' preferences—and voters believe in fighting crime at the local level.

While Federal law enforcement needs have been addressed—the number of Federal law enforcement agencies grew by 78% between 1978 and 2001 (Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Federal Law Enforcement)—all crime is local and support for local agencies should keep pace, not diminish.

Congress Has the Final Say

Recognizing the Congressional power of the purse, it is often-stated that "The President proposes and the Congress disposes." As an institution, the Congress maintains its finger on the national pulse and is vitally aware of the mood of the people. The corrosive effects of crime—and fear of crime—are well understood by the Congress. As a result, the Congress has been local law enforcement's primary champion during these budget debates—in recent years, Congressional appropriators have taken the lead to assure continuity of funding for local law enforcement. In each fiscal year from 2002 through 2006, Congressional appropriators have engaged in "very heavy lifting" to assure continuity of funding for law enforcement personnel, technology, and equipment, fully reflecting the national interest in maintaining and upgrading local law enforcement capabilities. Going forward, the national interest in seeing that local law enforcement is properly funded is in the hands of Congress—we believe that Congress will continue to meet the challenge.

Lee Colwell, DPA