



Federal Candidate Questionnaire

The following questions are included on PORAC's Candidate Questionnaire. Responses to these questions must be submitted electronically on our website at www.porac.org/candidate. This document is provided for your reference to allow for contemplation prior to submitting your response.

1) **Justice Department Grant Programs**

The Department of Justice (DOJ) administers grant programs that provide critical funding support for law enforcement programming:

- The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants Program (Byrne JAG) supports law enforcement and important programming in our communities including crime victim and witness initiatives, crime prevention and education, corrections, and drug treatment and enforcement programs.
- The Community Orienting Policing Services (COPS) grant programs are essential for the technical training of law enforcement officers and the development of policing strategies.
- The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HITDA) program provides important assistance to law enforcement in critical drug-trafficking zones that helps law enforcement maximize resources and participate in efficient information sharing.
- Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) Pilot Program provides grant funding to local and tribal law enforcement agencies to expand the use of body-worn cameras and explore their impact.

These programs are funded annually through the Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) appropriations bill.

- a. What is your general position on federal funding of grant programs for local law enforcement?
- b. Will you support full funding of these grant programs?

2) What is your position on Administration proposals to restrict so-called "sanctuary cities" from receiving Justice Department grants?

3) **Preserving Law Enforcement Pensions**

- a. Public pension plans are governed by both federal and state laws. Federal developments that could affect public pension systems include, but are not limited to, federal legislation pertaining to the tax treatment of retirement savings, Social Security, incentives or options to replace defined benefit (DB) pension plans, and transparency requirements for sponsors of state and local government employee pension benefit plans.

Do you support the continuation of DB Plans? If not, why?

- b. The Public Employee Pension Transparency Act (PEPTA), H.R.6290, would require state and local public pension plans to disclose their unfunded liabilities to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, but it would require them to calculate their liabilities using the rate of return on U.S. Treasury bonds. This would artificially inflate the unfunded liabilities to much higher levels than what the plans actually face.

What is your position on this legislation and why?

- c. The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R.1205, (which has 186 co-sponsors) would remove two provisions from the Social Security Act that penalize workers who split their careers between jobs that contribute to Social Security and jobs that do not, often state or local jobs. The provisions proposed to be repealed by this bill disproportionately affect law enforcement officers – effectively penalizing them for dedicating their lives to the service of their communities.

What is your position on this legislation and why?

4) Dismantling Human Trafficking Networks and Assisting Victims

Several bills have been introduced in this Congress to combat human trafficking and support trafficking victims. In general, the bills include some combination of provisions to impose harsher punishments for human trafficking offenses under federal law, provide funding and programming to assist trafficking victims, target human traffickers' funds by directing the Treasury Department to develop mechanisms for disrupting the financial networks of transnational organized criminals, and provide relief from deportation and adjustment of immigration status for trafficking victims in certain circumstances.

What steps do you believe Congress should take to address issues related to human trafficking and how would you accomplish this?

5) Gang Proliferation and Associated Violence and Crime

Several bills aimed at reducing gang membership and preventing gang-related violence and crime have been introduced in the 115th Congress. Pending legislation would combat the proliferation of gangs by imposing certain restrictions on immigration. Other legislation would provide funding for federal grants to support anti-gang programs at the federal, state, and local levels.

What steps do you believe Congress should take to address gang proliferation and associated violence and crime?

6) Criminal Justice Reform

- a. In May, the House passed the First Step Act, H.R. 5682, legislation aimed at helping inmates prepare for life after their release and reducing recidivism rates. The legislation is pending before the Senate, which is also considering its own prison reform package that, unlike H.R. 5682, includes sentencing reform.

What is your position on federal criminal justice reform, both prison reform and sentencing reform?

- b. What is your opinion of the criminal justice reforms undertaken in California, including:
- AB 109 (Prison realignment which transferred responsibility for supervising certain kinds of felony offenders and state prison parolees from state prisons and state parole agents to county jails and probation officers);
 - Proposition 47 (which changed numerous felonies into misdemeanors, including theft of a firearm and possession of date rape drugs);
 - Proposition 57 (Allows the parole board to release nonviolent prisoners once they have served the full sentence for their primary criminal offense & allows the parole board to disregard the victim's thoughts and opinions on the matter).

How does California's experiences with such reform impact your position on federal criminal justice reform?

7) The Heroes Lesley Zerebny and Gilbert Vega First Responders Survivor Act, H.R. 5060.

The Public Safety Officers Benefits' (PSOB) Program is a program that provides death, disability, and education benefits to federal, state, and local public safety officers and their survivors. Today, the PSOB program contains many flaws that prevent law enforcement officers and their families nationwide from receiving full death, disability, education benefits.

H.R. 5060, introduced by Rep. Raul Ruiz of Palm Desert (D-CA-36) and Rep. Paul Cook of Yucca Valley (R-CA-08), would improve and modify the PSOB program so that officers and their families receive the full benefits to which they are entitled.

The legislation would double the existing PSOB death and disability benefits from \$250,000 to \$500,000; increase the education benefit, the benefit that helps officers and their family members pay for higher education, from \$1,041 per month to \$2,000 per month; and remove existing burdens to ensure that families receive the full amount of benefits.

What is your position on this legislation, and if supportive, will you add your name as a cosponsor?

8) The School Training, Equipment, and Protection (STEP) Act, H.R. 5307.

Regrettably, deadly school shootings are on the rise: (1) Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (FL – Feb. 14, 2018), 17 killed, 14 injured; (2) Marshall County High School (KY – Jan. 23, 2018), 2 killed, 18 injured; and (3) Rancho Tehama Elementary School (CA – Nov. 14, 2017), 6 killed, 18 injured.

It is critical that faculty and staff know how to respond to these situations—and school safety officers (as well as the local law enforcement that support these schools) must have the necessary funding to guarantee the most effective security for youth. Unfortunately, school faculty and staff often do not know how to respond to active shooters; and by the time they have figured out what is going on and rushed to contact the police, it's often too late.

H.R. 5307, introduced by Rep. Stephen Knight of Antelope Valley (R-CA-25), aims to enhance school safety by:

- (1) Allocating \$50 million to improve school safety, including allowing schools to acquire technologies like surveillance systems and alarms that would notify law enforcement officers of an active shooter and help faculty/police protect students;
- (2) Allowing funds to be used to prepare faculty with the know-how to respond in active shooter situations; and,
- (3) Authorizing funding for active shooter training exercises for local law enforcement on school grounds and for coordination activities between local law enforcement and school teachers and staff.

What is your position on this legislation, and if supportive, will you add your name as a cosponsor?

9) The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, H.R. 4846.

Collective bargaining is important for state and local law enforcement—it allows officers to negotiate fair wages, hours, and terms of employment. Fortunately, in California, we are able to use collective bargaining to resolve these issues and other employment challenges, including budget shortfalls. However, public safety officers in 20 other states are being deprived of the right to bargain collectively over hours and wages with their employing agencies.

H.R. 4846 would establish a set of collective bargaining rights that states must, at a minimum, provide to public safety employees (including the right to bargain over wage, hours, employment; and the right to join a labor organization). The bill would also give the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) the ability to enforce these rights (which protects existing collective bargaining rights currently in place in addition to expanding those rights in states where they do not currently exist).

- a. What is your position on collective bargaining for public safety employees?
- b. What is your position on this legislation, and if supportive, will you add your name as a cosponsor?

10) Your Campaign

Please tell us about your campaign. In particular, we would like to know why you believe you will win, how much money you expect to raise and from where you think most of your support will come. Please list your campaign manager, policy director, treasurer, endorsements, and major supporters that you have and of which you believe we should be made aware.

11) 116th Congress

- a. Do you have any ideas for legislation relating to law enforcement, officers, victims or any other issues you want to mention and that you would like Congress to consider next year?
- b. What are your legislative priorities for the 116th Congress?
- c. On which Committees do you expect to sit?