

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Law Enforcement Opposition to H.R. 115, "Thin Blue Line Act"**

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein,

We are current and former law enforcement leaders and officers from jurisdictions across the country. We ask you to oppose H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act. We do so because we believe this bill will do little to protect the lives of police and first responders and will drive away resources proven to be effective at protecting law enforcement and preventing and solving crime.

We are all too familiar with the risks that local, state, and federal law enforcement and first responders take each day to prevent, investigate, and prosecute crime. In fact, some of us have served alongside colleagues who were killed in the line of duty. We understand the impulse to threaten those who have murdered our fellow officers with the death penalty, and some of us have experienced that desire directly.

But we also know that the death penalty, as it currently operates, is poor public policy. It is ineffective, expensive, and can make irrevocable mistakes. It is also used disparately and often on vulnerable populations, which undermines our ability to create effective and trusted relationships with those in the community on whose support our success depends. That is why, while some of us may philosophically support the death penalty, we all oppose its expansion in practice—even under the auspices of supporting law enforcement.

Each of us understands that it takes many and varied resources to keep our communities safe. We need strong partnerships with local government and the communities we serve. We need well-functioning and modern systems to collect, store and process police activities, crime data, and evidence. We need equipment to protect and assist officers as they perform their duties. One tool virtually never seen on our list of needs is the death penalty.

In short, we believe H.R. 115 is an unnecessary expansion of an already flawed and ineffective policy. We encourage you to oppose this bill and instead support measures that promote the overall health, safety, and welfare of law enforcement and the communities we have been sworn to protect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**James Abbott**

Chief, West Orange (NJ) Police Department (1997-Present)

**John Breckenridge**

Officer, Manchester (NH) Police Department (ret.)

**James Davidsaver**

Emergency Management Director, Lancaster County, Nebraska; former captain, Lincoln (NE) Police Department

**Neill Franklin**

Baltimore Police Department (2000-2010); Maryland State Police (1976-1999)

**Gerald Galloway**

Chief, Southern Pines (NC) Police Department (1988-2005); Past President, North Carolina Chiefs of Police Association; former Executive Committee member, IACP

**Terence Inch**

Professor of Criminal Justice, York College of Pennsylvania; Former Commissioner of Police, Hellam Township (PA); Former Detective Chief Inspector, New Scotland Yard, London

**George Kain, Ph.D**

Police commissioner, Ridgefield, CT; Division of Justice and Law Administration at Western Connecticut State University

**Douglas Orr, Ph.D.**

Adjunct Professor, Champlain College (2009-present); Adjunct Professor, Gonzaga University (2006-present); Detective, Spokane (WA) Police Department (1996-present); Corporal, Idaho State Police (1992-1996); Patrol Officer, Greenville (SC) Police Department (1987-1992)

**Norman Stamper**

Chief, Seattle Police Department (1994-2000); San Diego Police Department (1966-1994)

**James Trainum**

Detective, Washington Metropolitan Police Department (1983-2010)

**David Walchak**

Deputy Assistant Director (Ret.) FBI (2000-2004), Sr. Advisor FBI (1999-2000), Sr. Policy Advisor USDOJ COPS Office (1997-1999), Chief of Police (Ret.) Concord, NH (1975-1997), President, International Association of Chiefs of Police (1995-1996)

*Affiliations listed for identification purposes only*