

**Testimony Of  
Congressman Peter King (R-NY)**

**“Personnel Issues Affecting Federal Law  
Enforcement & Pay Reform”**

**House Committee on Government Reform**

**Subcommittees on:**

**Civil Service and Agency Reorganization**

**&**

**Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and  
Human Resources**

**July 23, 2003**

Chairwoman Davis, Chairman Souder, Ranking Members Davis and Cummings, Members of the Subcommittees, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today on an issue that is very important to the men and women serving to protect us from terrorism and crime.

I will be certain to keep my remarks short and concise as I am sure members from other organizations, such as the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, will be able to answer and testify to the day-to-day personnel issues that confront federal law enforcement.

As the son of a New York City Police Officer, I believe it is imperative that law enforcement officers have a livable wage. We need to draw dedicated and talented professionals to perform the difficult work that keeps us safe and secure. It should be a priority of Congress that the best and brightest are working in federal law enforcement.

Unfortunately, federal law enforcement agencies are not only combating crime they are confronting serious retention and recruitment problems within their departments. It should trouble many to see federal law enforcement agencies in high cost areas with zero applicants for supervisory positions or a job announcement without a closing date.

We must face the reality that many detectives on the local and state level are paid substantially more than their federal law enforcement counterparts. The starting salary for a New York City Police Detective is \$55,000. A Secret Service Agent's starting salary in New York is a little over \$38,000. This disparity presents numerous problems - especially for recruitment and retention.

To counter this, I have introduced H.R. 466, the Federal Law Enforcement Locality Pay Adjustment Act, which to date, has 225 cosponsors, including 33 members of the Committee on Government Reform.

H.R. 466 will ease the pay disparities for federal agents, including our own U.S. Capitol Police, by increasing the locality pay adjustments paid to them and by allowing supervisory personnel to make more than their subordinates – a must if we are to attract experienced candidates for

supervisory positions. In fact, under the current system, many mid and high-level supervisors do not make more than their subordinates. It would be foolish to continue under the assumption that a law enforcement agency, especially in a high cost of living area, would be able to attract qualified candidates for managerial positions which involve added responsibilities with no additional pay. To address this, H.R. 466 will allow mid and high-level supervisors to earn 25% of their salaries in overtime. We cannot continue to run the risk of having experienced, senior law enforcement agents seek employment in the private sector solely because they are at or near the pay cap – with no incentive to remain.

At the other end of the spectrum, we are seeing young, qualified recruits leaving federal law enforcement agencies to seek other employment, more often than not, in the more lucrative private sector. Disillusionment with pay and concern of a possible transfer to a high-cost area creates an atmosphere where agents have quit or are looking to get out. In the case of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), some sources have indicated that since September 11<sup>th</sup>, of the more than 1,000 agents hired and trained, 125 have since resigned. What must also be factored into these departures and compounds the loss, is the time and funding law enforcement agencies spent on training these recruits.

To ensure that the men and women in our federal law enforcement agencies and our U.S. Capitol Police are compensated fairly and equally for the service that they provide, I firmly believe that H.R. 466 is the solution.

I thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak before you on this critical issue.