



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

May 13, 2021

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The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto and Senator Grassley,

I write on behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) to express our strong support for S. 1502, the *COPS Counseling Act*. The MCCA is a professional association of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada.

Ensuring officer health and wellness is a top priority for the MCCA. The Association has continually advocated for a comprehensive approach that addresses physical, mental, and emotional health. Officers frequently encounter stressful and traumatic situations, and they must have access to the programs and resources they need to help them healthily process these incidents.

The stigma of mental wellness is a difficult obstacle for many in the law enforcement profession to overcome. Peer support programs can help address this challenge as officers who are in need of help may be most comfortable reaching out to their fellow officers. By requiring DOJ to develop best practices for peer support programs, the *COPS Counseling Act* will help local law enforcement agencies establish new programs and bolster existing ones. Maintaining officer's privacy is also an important element of successful peer support programs. Therefore, the MCCA encourages agencies to incorporate confidentiality protections similar to those in the legislation into their programs.

Thank you for both your continued leadership on this critical topic and your support of our country's brave law enforcement officers. Please do not hesitate to contact me at art.acevedo@miami-police.org if the MCCA can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Chief Art Acevedo
Chief, Miami Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association

Calgary, Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Montreal, Québec
Ottawa, Ontario
Peel Region, Ontario
Toronto, Ontario
Vancouver, B.C.
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