



NEW JERSEY STATE LODGE
FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

STATE HEADQUARTERS • 108 WEST STATE STREET • TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08608

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June 18, 2021

Dear Senators:

I am writing to you on behalf of the 14,000 law enforcement officers of the New Jersey State Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and their families in opposition to Senate Bill No. 685 (Permits Municipal, County and Regional Police and Fire Forces to Establish Five Year Residency Requirements for Police Officers and Firefighters). *It is the position of the FOP that this bill is based on faulty facts and policy making decisions and will result in unnecessary hardships for police officers and, more importantly, their families.* Furthermore, although permissive and prospective, the FOP believes this bill contradicts the spirit of the United States of America which allows individuals –including law enforcement officers–to live where they choose and where they can best provide for the needs of their loved ones. The decision for every resident of this country as to where they wish to live *should be a personal decision* and should never be mandated by the Government. The FOP also believes Senate Bill No. 685 may violate Federal Civil Rights Laws and that residency requirements should be a negotiable term of employment through the Collective bargaining process.

You should also note that the practical effect of this bill, if it becomes law, will be an impact on the hiring pools that will be available to communities which adopt a five year residency ordinance. By limiting where police officers and their families may live, future applicants will look to communities which allow them to live where they and their families believe is in their best interest. Additionally, if the intent of the bill is to assure that police officers become invested in the communities in which they work, know that they are professionals who work within specific guidelines and boundaries of accepted practice. These guidelines remain the same regardless of where they live. Police officers may live outside a specific area but they are very much invested in the localities they police on a daily basis.

Lastly, please consider the consequences of requiring an officer to reside in the community in which he may be policing. Will the officer make an arrest during his or her tour and come home to irate family members of the suspect sitting on his porch wanting to debate the merits of the arrest? Will the officer's children be targeted in school because Dad (or Mom) the cop arrested another student's father, mother, or other family member? Let the officer decide where it is safe to live with his or her family.

In conclusion, a residency requirement will not make the work of a police officer less difficult to perform, does not make the community any safer and actually makes it more potentially dangerous and difficult for officers and their families.

PLEASE VOTE NO ON SENATE BILL NO. 685.

Respectfully,

Robert W. Fox

President