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BILL ANALYSIS | Center for Law & Justice

ANALYSIS OF H.R. 6448, THE INVEST TO PROTECT ACT OF 2022

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TOPLINE POINTS

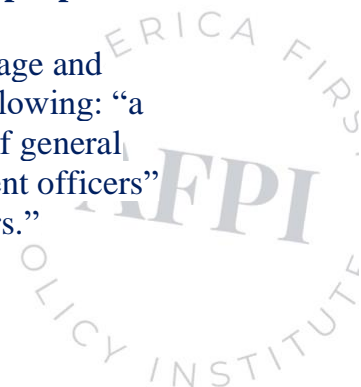
- ★ The Invest to Protect Act of 2022 will be touted as a pro-police/crime-reduction funding measure, but it falls far short of having any meaningful impact on rising crime and violence across the Nation.
- ★ The bill limits grant funding to police departments of fewer than 125 officers even though most of the crime and violence is occurring in much larger communities.
- ★ The bill further prioritizes funding for certain training measures, such as de-escalation and domestic violence training, over the actual recruitment and retention of police officers.

Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives passed [H.R. 6448](#), the Invest to Protect Act of 2022. A corresponding Senate bill, [S. 3860](#), passed unanimously in August. While the bill will no doubt be touted as a pro-police/crime-reduction funding measure by Congress, the bill falls far short of having any meaningful impact on rising crime rates, nor does it remotely address the generational crisis in recruiting and retention facing police departments across the Nation.

If signed into law, this legislation would:

“...Direct the Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services of the Department of Justice to carry out a grant program to provide assistance to police departments with fewer than 200 law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.”

Section 2 (a)(3)(A) and (B) of the bill, however, provides contradictory language and outlines “eligible local government” recipients of the grant program as the following: “a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level that employs fewer than 125 law enforcement officers” or “a Tribal government that employs fewer than 125 law enforcement officers.”



Conclusion:

The overwhelming focus of the Nation’s rising crime and violence is in major urban population centers. Of the top 15 cities thus far in 2022 with the highest murder rates per capita, not even one would qualify as a grant recipient under H.R. 6448. Assisting smaller police departments’ efforts in addressing their existing resource gaps is laudable, but it will not have any measurable impact on the crime wave currently affecting the Nation.

Section 2 (e) establishes the activities for which grant funding may be used. Eligible activities include the following: de-escalation training for law enforcement officers; victim-centered training for law enforcement officers in handling situations of domestic violence; evidence-based safety training for situations involving specific populations, such as mentally disturbed persons, vulnerable youth, etc.; offsetting overtime costs associated to the outlined training; officer access to mental health services; and other designated training activity.

Only two provisions in Section 2 (e) mention efforts to directly recruit or retain officers. Instead, the focus of available resources is almost exclusively designated for specific training purposes. In fact, Section 2 (d) (4) specifically allows for preferences to be given to applicants who seek to apply funding for all designated activities except those related to *recruiting and retention bonuses*, behavioral health services for police officers, police officer reimbursement for specific graduate school programs, and data collection on police practices.

Conclusion:

Any investment in protecting American communities must address the core issues driving higher crime rates and increased violence. There is nothing inherently wrong with providing resources to increase or improve police officer access to training programs, but increasing access to training programs concerning domestic violence or vulnerable youth will not drive down crime rates or violence in communities in the direct way that communities need at this time. At the root of our Nation’s recent rise in crime and violence is a fundamental lack of police personnel and the political will to enforce existing laws. H.R. 6448 does not address the heart of the crisis in any meaningful way.

The bipartisan congressional effort to pursue pro-law enforcement measures, even those of marginal utility, is a welcome departure from the dangerous and ill-conceived “defund the police” rhetoric that has dominated much of the public discourse over the past several years. While H.R. 6448 is an incremental step in the right direction, however, it should not be viewed as a crime reduction measure of any meaningful sort.



Works Cited

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