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VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

Position Regarding Law Enforcement Retirement Benefits

August 1, 2007

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The passage of Senate Bill 1166 by the 2007 Virginia General Assembly to increase the allowable retirement multiplier for Virginia law enforcement officers has been the top priority of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police for many years. Virginia's law enforcement executives are faced with the growing challenge of attracting and retaining high caliber individuals to serve as police officers, and employee benefits are a key factor in meeting this challenge. Recruiting potential officers that meet the high standards our citizens expect and deserve means that law enforcement agencies must be able to compete with positions in the private sector that offer attractive salaries and benefits. Often, the costs associated with recruiting and retaining quality officers and avoiding high turnover are greater than the costs incurred by dedicating the funds to provide a competitive retirement benefit.

The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police strongly urges our local governments to quickly adopt a commitment to funding the increase in the LEOS retirement multiplier from the current 1.7 percent to the 1.85 percent authorized in Senate Bill 1166. This legislation led to the mandated funding of the multiplier increase to 1.85 percent for the Virginia's State Police troopers and elected Sheriffs. While well-deserved, this now creates a gross inequity in Virginia's law enforcement community which will have a serious impact on the ability of local law enforcement agencies to compete with the benefits afforded to state troopers.

A number of Virginia localities have taken the lead in providing this much-needed benefit to our local law enforcement officers, including but not limited to: the Cities of Harrisonburg, Poquoson, Chesapeake, Buena Vista, Manassas Park, Galax, Manassas and Radford; the Towns of South Boston, Bridgewater, Vinton and Front Royal; and Richmond, Page, Chesterfield, Giles, Franklin, Goochland and Henrico Counties.

The VACP believes that localities that act to increase the LEOS multiplier for their law enforcement officers will be more likely to retain their current officers, compete for the best new recruits and improve the overall morale of the officers now serving their communities.

On behalf of the VACP membership,

Dana G. Schrad, Executive Director