

Georgia US Senate CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire, prepared by the Georgia FOP Legislative Committee, is being provided to both current US Georgia Senators and to those candidates seeking the position in the upcoming 2022 election. Thanks to each of you for taking the time to answer questions from our membership.

The following is a brief summation of the top legislative priorities of the Fraternal Order of Police:

- ***Social Security issues: Support H.R. 82/S. 1302, the “Social Security Fairness Act” and Oppose Mandatory Participation in Social Security***

The FOP strongly supports the repeal of both the “Windfall Elimination Provision” (WEP) and the “Government Pension Offset” (GPO). The FOP vehemently opposes legislation which would mandate participation in Social Security for public employees or new hires who are currently outside the Social Security system.

- ***Support the “State and Local Law Enforcement Discipline, Accountability and Due Process Act”***

The FOP strongly supports a “bill of rights” for law enforcement officers who are, in a number of jurisdictions, denied their due process rights by police administrators and management in noncriminal proceedings. There is a need for a minimum level of procedural protections for law enforcement officers accused of administrative wrongdoing because of the gravity of potential harm to officers created by this lack of uniform safeguards.

To earn the endorsement of our members, we expect candidates to share our values and articulate how they would use their position to enact laws that protect and stop laws that erode the rights and quality of life of Law Enforcement Officers. Your responses to the following questions will help us determine where our priorities align.

1. The Fraternal Order of Police strongly supports ***H.R. 82/S. 1302, the “Social Security Fairness Act,”*** which would repeal both the “Windfall Elimination Provision” (WEP) and the “Government Pension Offset” (GPO) in current law. The WEP penalizes certain public employees who also worked in the private sector and paid into the Social Security system, through a substantial reduction in their benefits because they also collect a government pension. The GPO provision in current law causes the reduction or elimination of the spouse's or widow(er)'s benefit from Social Security by two-thirds of the monthly amount received from the government pension. The FOP has called for Congress to repeal the WEP and GPO as part of a legislative package in response to the

COVID-19 pandemic to simultaneously end a gross unfairness against retired public employees and help to stimulate the economy by eliminating a reduction in the Social Security benefits for these Americans. We believe that the repeal of these two provisions will help our vulnerable retirees and will help stabilize our nation's economy. If elected, will you actively support this measure?

Our men and women in blue put their lives on the line every single day and deserve the very best benefits that we have to offer. After a lifetime of service and hard work, they deserve to be treated with respect and with dignity. Taking from their pockets is a step in the wrong direction. The "Social Security Fairness Act" has my full support.

2. Under the doctrine of qualified immunity, government officials, performing discretionary functions—like a law enforcement officer making an arrest—are immune from civil suit unless a plaintiff can show that the official violated clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person or officer would have known. It is important to emphasize that this immunity is not automatic and does not protect anyone who engages in a criminal act. It exists only for civil suits and is only available if granted by a court. Qualified immunity is critical to law enforcement. a. Do you support the existing qualified immunity doctrine?

- a. What is your position on "qualified immunity?"

Yes, I think it's important that we allow law enforcement officers to do their jobs without fear of frivolous lawsuits hanging over their heads. We are a country founded on law and order – and it is essential that we have police officers who can enforce our laws. When in office, I'll fight to ensure that our police are equipped to do their jobs and keep us all safe.

- b. If you are against it, are you against it for every occupation who currently has qualified immunity which includes teachers and others?
3. The Fraternal Order of Police strongly supports legislation which would articulate the rights of law enforcement officers who are, in too many jurisdictions, denied their due process rights by police administrators and management. If elected, will you actively support such legislation?

Absolutely, I consider it very important that officers have their due process rights. When in office I will work tirelessly to ensure officers are protected — whether on the streets or in the office. Officers need to be able to operate without second guessing every move they make. They need to know parameters and expectations and then be empowered to execute their jobs.

4. More than 90% of our nation's law enforcement officers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic are employed by local and State governments. Efforts to protect public health at this time have had a devastating economic impact on local and State governments

which need direct Federal financial support to ensure that vital services like public safety remain available. Congress has provided unprecedented aid to businesses and other segments of our economy, but not enough has been made available to our State and local governments. As a US Georgia Senator will you support local and State governments and ensure they have the financial means to provide full public safety services?

I've made it clear on my campaign that public safety is very important. It's not only important to me, but also to Georgia. When I'm traveling across the state, I hear every day from moms who are nervous to go to the mall or kids who are nervous to go to school because of the crime. After the "defund the police" movement law enforcement officers are more discouraged than ever. It is important that we not only fund our police but also that we truly support them and let them know that we have their backs. When I'm a U.S. Senator, I will make sure that our public safety heroes have the resources they need to keep us all safe.

5. The current pandemic represents a new, physical threat to our law enforcement officers, but the heightened vigilance, rising crime and mental stress endured by these officers is as old as the profession itself and often exacts a toll on their mental health. Our law enforcement agencies need to do more than simply protect their officers' physical safety, they must also do more to improve their mental wellness and resiliency. The Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) issued a report to Congress pursuant to the enactment of the law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. How will your office seek to implement the recommendations in this report?

Mental health is extremely important and will be one of the main issues I focus on in Washington. I've been very open with my own journey and encourage others to seek help as well. I've gone around the world to share the message with troops, veterans, and police officers that it is okay to ask for help. My office will do its part to bring these issues to our country's attention.

6. Law enforcement is facing a high level of hostility from the communities we protect and serve. A defund the police movement has become a narrative used by some to do away with funding to our local police. Hateful rhetoric and those calling for violence are having an impact—ambush attacks on law enforcement and police shootings continue to increase. The public image of policing and police officers have been terribly distorted. How will you as a US Senator demonstrate support and commitment to our states and nation's law enforcement officers?

I tell people I meet on the campaign trail all the time that "defund the police" is one of the dumbest ideas I've ever heard. We have to back our men and women in blue at all costs. I am committed to fighting against any legislation which defunds the police or hurts our great law enforcement's image in any way.

7. The FOP supports legislation like *H.R. 3029/S. 774, the “Protect and Serve Act,”* would create a new Federal offense for those who deliberately target law enforcement officers with violence and is a direct response to the increased number of law enforcement officers who have been targeted for attack? According to several Federal studies, the number of officers shot in the line of duty has been increasing steadily since at least 2012. The number of deaths attributed to gunfire has remained mostly stable, thanks to advances in anti-ballistic technology and medical trauma science. The fact remains, however, that more officers are shot every year and far too many of these attacks are the result of ambushes and unprovoked attacks. Will you pledge to support this legislation?

The Protect and Serve Act has my full support. This hateful, anti-police rhetoric which often leads to violence needs to be stopped. It’s no surprise that when we talk about all cops being bad we begin to see more crimes against our officers. We need to do everything we can to stop this behavior and educate people about the roles that police officers play in keeping everyone safe.

8. The Fraternal Order of Police supports legislation that would limit the amount of damages a criminal defendant could recover as a result of injuries that the criminal incurred in the course of committing or being apprehended for a felony or a crime of violence. Would you support such legislation if it were introduced?

Police need to be able to do their jobs. They should not have to worry about being sued whenever they’re patrolling the streets and keeping communities safe. When in office, I will support all legislation to ensure that police officers can do their jobs.

9. “Racial profiling” is a favorite topic of media reports on police. The FOP has always condemned the practice and asserted that it is not the policy of any U.S. law enforcement agency to base enforcement decisions solely on race. However, legislation like *S. 597, the “End Racial Profiling Act,”* continues to be introduced in Congress. How do you define “racial profiling”? Do you believe that Federal legislation is necessary to address this issue and if so, what would the legislation do and how would affect law enforcement activity at the State and local level?

Race is something many politicians talk about to divide us. Do we have some bad apples? Yes, but we can’t blame everybody for the actions of a few. Racial profiling, like defunding the police, should have no place in law enforcement. We need to ensure that we are arresting people who are breaking the law, regardless of what they look like or where they come from. I know that we already have laws on the books which make this practice illegal. Whenever the federal government gets involved in anything it makes it worse. Police should be allowed to police themselves, not the other way around. I don’t think any federal legislation is necessary to ensure that most cops do the right thing.

10. Several organizations and many progressive mayors have accused State and local law enforcement agencies receiving Federal assistance through the 287(g) programs of using

these funds to “target communities of color, including disproportionate numbers of Latinos in particular places, for arrest.” The FOP rejects these assertions as hateful and counter to the law enforcement mission. The 287(g) program is a powerful example of a successful cooperative effort between State and local law enforcement and the Federal government. For State and local agencies, the Federal resources provided by the program allow them to pursue investigations relating to violent crimes, human trafficking, gang/organized crime activity, sexual-related offenses, narcotics trafficking and money laundering. It also allows the Federal government to tap into the resources and capabilities of State and local agencies to identify and remove serious and violent criminals who have illegally entered the United States. Given the chance would you continue to support or expand this program if giving the opportunity in the Senate?

It will be my mission to make sure that state and local law enforcement continues to have all the tools necessary for the job. When in office, I will support this program. Criminals are getting smarter and law enforcement need to be able to keep up. Cooperation with federal, state and local law enforcement not only keeps our communities safe, it keeps our whole state safe. I will continue to support legislation which brings all resources to the table to protect Georgians.

12. The FOP supports legislation like *H.R. 1325, the “Protect and Serve Act,”* would create a new Federal offense for those who deliberately target law enforcement officers with violence and is a direct response to the increased number of law enforcement officers who have been targeted for attack? According to several Federal studies, the number of officers shot in the line of duty has been increasing steadily since at least 2012. The number of deaths attributed to gunfire has remained mostly stable, thanks to advances in anti-ballistic technology and medical trauma science. The fact remains, however, that more officers are shot every year and far too many of these attacks are the result of ambushes and unprovoked attacks. Will you pledge to support this legislation?

The Protect and Serve Act has all my support. This hateful, anti-police rhetoric needs to be stopped. It’s no surprise that when we talk about all cops being bad, and dangerous that we see more and more violence against our officers. We need to do everything we can to stop this behavior. (Same Question as #7).

13. What type of Police reforms, training, or retraining are you for or against?

The Georgia FOP is open to dialogue which is what we think makes us all better as a nation.

When I travel across the state, I attend a lot of listening sessions and hear what issues people are facing in their neighborhoods. I talk to them and let them know they are heard. I think law enforcement ought to do the same. Get to know your community, learn who the people are that you are protecting. We all need to grab a seat at the table and talk to one another. I think a dialogue is a great way to do this. I’m against any reforms that will make it harder for officers to do their job or put them in greater danger. I think officers should be lifted up, not punished. I think we need to better educate people on what law enforcement does, increase mental health

training for officers, and increase state and local partnerships to ensure that neighborhoods have access to every public safety resource possible,