



FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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FLEOA, NJFOP File Suit Against New Jersey Over Violations of LEOSA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2020

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) issued a joint press release with the New Jersey State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police (NJFOP) announcing a lawsuit against the State of New Jersey for violating qualified retired law enforcement officers rights under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA). New Jersey has repeatedly denigrated the federal rights of qualified retired law enforcement officers via establishing a state patchwork of laws that ignore the clear language and rights outlined in LEOSA.

In 2004, Congress determined that current and retired law enforcement officers are well qualified under federal law to continue carrying authorized firearms under a clear framework established under LEOSA. The Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) allows current and retired law enforcement officers carrying authorized photographic identification to carry a concealed firearm throughout the United States in compliance with the terms of LEOSA. In 2010 and in 2013 Congress voted to amend and expand the law to provide even greater access and clarity surrounding the implementation of LEOSA.

Despite the clear Congressional and support of previous New Jersey legislators, the State of New Jersey has chosen to consistently neglect this important public safety federal law. New Jersey has enacted state laws that deny qualified law enforcement officers their concealed carry rights under LEOSA. These unnecessary and additional regulations on retired law enforcement officers diminish public safety and are preempted by the clear mandate of federal law.

"When an officer takes their oath to protect and serve their community, it does not end when the badge comes off and an officer retires. The Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) acknowledges this fact and provides qualified, former law enforcement with the opportunity to continue serving the public after their retirement if they feel compelled. When Congress passed LEOSA with wide bipartisan support, they accepted that there are no better trained individuals to respond to a threat than qualified retired law enforcement officers," said New Jersey FOP President Bob Fox. **"After almost two decades, I am happy that the NJFOP and FLEOA have joined forces in bringing a joint lawsuit against the State of New Jersey pertaining to LEOSA. It is time that New Jersey follows current federal law, and not create their own. This successful federal lawsuit will give our New Jersey and National members the rights they have earned and deserve under federal law."**

"In the state of New Jersey, we see that criminals at times have easier access to firearms than qualified retired law enforcement officers. The intent of LEOSA was to bring a force multiplier of qualified retired law enforcement officers onto the streets of America, so criminals would think twice before acting," FLEOA President Larry Cosme said. **"By adding their own regulatory scheme that violates the clear language of LEOSA and making it almost impossible in some cases for an officer to carry their authorized firearm, the State of New Jersey continues to make the public less safe for its residents, who are already impacted by the violent crime statistics in some of its major cities."**

"Under LEOSA, a clear set of regulations is prescribed for qualified law enforcement offices to follow. Within those regulations, the agencies or departments that an officer served with make the determination if an officer is qualified or not. New Jersey regulations try to preempt that process and make arbitrary decisions regarding who is and is not qualified, including the ability to deny an otherwise qualified officer, a clear breach of federal law," Cosme continued. **"FLEOA has worked closely with other states who have a**

fair and federally compliant interpretation of LEOSA. We have attempted to work with New Jersey state officials but have been thwarted. Now we are left with the only recourse that will protect our members and their rights by filing suit against the state. Congress has protected their right not once, not twice, but three times yet New Jersey ignores them. This is not a matter of states' rights or gun rights, it is a matter of public safety and New Jersey politicians thwarting federal law and endangering the public instead of supporting the safety to the officers who have trained, committed, and devoted their lives to protecting the public."

FLEOA is the nation's largest non-partisan, not-for-profit professional association representing more than 28,000 federal law enforcement officers and agents across 65 federal agencies.

The National FOP has over 350,000 members and the State FOP has over 13,000 members.

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