

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

**Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
Floor Statement on H.R. 1139,
the COPS Improvement Act of 2009**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of H.R. 1139. I want to commend my colleague on the Judiciary Committee, Congressman Weiner, for introducing this important bill.

As I remarked during the Committee markup, this bill has special significance for me. In 1994, as Attorney General of Puerto Rico, I worked alongside the Clinton Administration to secure passage of the legislation that established the COPS program. As someone whose own family has been deeply touched by violent crime, I am unbending in my belief that the most basic human right a government owes to its citizens is the right to personal security. The COPS program is rooted in this fundamental premise.

Thanks to the COPS program, over \$160 million in grants have been awarded to law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico to hire new officers, improve school safety, and purchase crime-fighting equipment. No statistic, however, can capture the true impact the COPS program has made. The numbers of lives saved, crimes prevented, and families spared the pain of losing a loved one—these numbers are beyond calculation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.