



National League of Cities



ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities



May 7, 2008

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the nation's 3,066 counties, 19,000 cities and towns, their county and city elected and appointed officials, elected sheriffs, and state and local personnel professionals, we strongly urge you to oppose H.R.980, the "Public Safety Employer-

Employee Cooperation Act of 2007," which may be brought up for consideration in the next few days.

The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007 would severely damage the historic relationships that exist between state and local elected officials, their employees, and the constituents they represent. State, county, and municipal officials provide workers with excellent salaries, benefits and working conditions that are responsive to the fiscal needs and limitations of state, county and city governments, and reflect the priorities of the communities that elected officials represent.

This legislation would force states and localities to adopt federal collective bargaining standards, disregard existing state laws and ordinances that were developed to create an effective and efficient public sector workforce, and place the needs of a select group of workers – public safety officers – in front of the larger needs of the community or other public sector employees. It would, quite simply, undermine state, county and municipal autonomy with respect to making fundamental employment decisions by mandating specific working conditions, including collective bargaining.

Even states that already have comprehensive collective bargaining laws are likely to be impacted by H.R.980. The bill gives the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) the power to draft regulations defining the scope of collective bargaining and to decide whether or not states are in compliance with those regulations. Even the more than 35 states that have granted their state and local government employees the right to enter into collective bargaining arrangements of some type would be subject to FLRA review and could be out of compliance, even though these states have done so within the framework of their constitutions and state laws. H.R.980 would establish a precedent for federal interference in all employee-employer relationships between state, county and municipal governments and their employees.

In light of the labor protections provided by state laws, labor agreements, state, county and city government civil service systems and personnel procedures, we believe that this law is unnecessary at best and potentially very damaging at worst. States, counties, cities and towns have always been committed to providing their public safety workers with excellent working conditions, competitive salaries, excellent health and pension benefits, and a working environment that is safe and appropriate. At the same time, state, county, city and town elected officials must balance the needs of public safety workers and the needs of the citizens they represent. H.R.980 would alter that balance permanently and irrevocably.

On behalf of America's 3,066 counties, 19,000 cities and towns, their county and city elected and appointed officials, elected and appointed sheriffs, and state, county and city personnel professionals, we urge you to respect the long-standing principle of non-interference in employer-employee relations that has existed among the federal, state and local governments, and reject this legislation.

Sincerely yours,



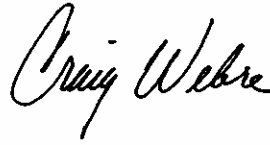
Larry E. Naake
Executive Director
National Association of Counties (NACo)



Donald J. Borut
Executive Director
National League of Cities (NLC)



R. Keith Hite
President
National Association of
Towns and Townships (NATAT)



Craig Webre
President
National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)



Robert O'Neill
Executive Director
International City/County
Management Association (ICMA)



Charles Thompson, Jr.
Executive Director and General Counsel
International Municipal Lawyers Association
(IMLA)



Neil E. Reichenberg
Executive Director
International Public Management
Association for Human Resources
(IPMA-HR)



Michael T. Kolb
Executive Director
National Public Employer Labor Relations
Association (NPELRA)