

**Statement of Crime Subcommittee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Full Committee Markup of H.R. 1550
The Federal Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention Act of 2011
July 20, 2011**

H.R. 1550, introduced by Mr. Pierluisi, addresses the problem of high crime areas across the United States.

We are fortunate to live in a time of declining crime rates, despite the difficult economic climate. The violent crime rate has fallen by over five percent in each of the last two years, and the rate of property crimes has fallen 8.5 percent over the past decade. Clearly this is a trend that we hope to continue.

However, in spite of the decline in national crime rates, there are parts of the country where homicides and other violent crimes remain a serious, and even increasing, problem. These areas need our help.

The Department of Justice is already taking steps to address the areas of the country with high crime rates. For example, in February

2010, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Puerto Rico entered into a memorandum of understanding with Puerto Rican law enforcement to provide greater prosecutorial coordination in cases involving concurrent jurisdiction, including drug trafficking in airports, bank robberies, and the sexual exploitation of minors. Federal prosecutors in Puerto Rico have also been busy bringing indictments against 34 individuals for drug trafficking in November 2010, and another 132 indictments for drug trafficking as part of a joint ATF-DEA- Puerto Rico police department strike force in December 2010.

However, there is still more work to do. H.R. 1550 directs the Department of Justice to consider how to best assign, recruit, and retain federal law enforcement officers in the areas of the country hit hardest by violent crime. This is common sense legislation that, instead of authorizing new spending, asks the Department of Justice to use its current resources as wisely as possible.

I support this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 1550.