National Federation of Federal Employees,
IAMAW, AFL-CIO

Support the Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act (H.R. 673)

Position: **Under current law, the federal government grants enhanced salary and retirement benefits to those officers with "law enforcement officer" (LEO) status. However, since federal officers in nearly two dozen agencies are not formally classified as law enforcement officers, thousands of federal employees are unjustly excluded from receiving equal pay and retirement benefits. The Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act (H.R. 673) would amend the term law enforcement officer so that all federal officers involved in law enforcement become eligible for the same pay and retirement benefits. NFFE-IAM strongly supports this legislation.**

The Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act of 2009 (H.R. 673) would modify the definition of the term "law enforcement officer" (LEO) within the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Under this new definition, LEO status would be extended to all federal employees who carry firearms and are involved in the investigation or apprehension of either suspected or convicted criminals.

In line with previous legislation, upon receiving LEO status, these federal officers would witness substantive improvements in their pay and retirement benefits. These enhanced benefits include major increases in retirement annuities and the option of retiring with full health and life insurance after reaching the age of 50 and working a minimum of twenty years with the federal government.

Overall, the legislation would reclassify an estimated 30,000 federal employees as law enforcement officers. Those impacted by the Act would include workers from nearly two dozen agencies, such as the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Mint, and the Internal Revenue Service.

Federal law enforcement officers are regularly involved in hazardous work with tremendous risk. As such, the proposed legislation properly rewards those workers who place their lives in harm's way to defend the United States. Additionally, experts suggest that the implementation of the Act would save taxpayers millions of dollars each year by reducing worker turnover, improving workforce retention, and ultimately decreasing recruitment and development costs.

The Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act of 2009 makes sound economic sense and rightfully honors those federal officers who bravely protect our country every day.