

# **From the Assistant Secretary: Welcome to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: Office *for* State and Local Law Enforcement**

Note: This article appeared in the August 2012 issue of the IACP's [\*Police Chief\*](#) Magazine.

In July 2011, after a 36-year career in law enforcement and a brief period in the private sector, I had the honor of being asked to serve as the assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office for State and Local Law Enforcement (OSLLE). Having previously served as the assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Office of Law Enforcement Coordination from 2002 to 2008, I was grateful to have the opportunity to once again serve the United States and the law enforcement community.

On the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, Congress created the OSLLE in 2007 for the purpose of leading the coordination of DHS-wide policies relating to state, local, and tribal law enforcement's role in preventing acts of terrorism and to serve as the primary liaison between DHS and nonfederal law enforcement agencies across the country.<sup>1</sup>

To effectively serve as the law enforcement community's liaison to DHS, my office works every day with other DHS components to get information out of Washington, D.C., and into the hands of our nonfederal law enforcement partners. Through the OSLLE, our state, local, and tribal partners are kept informed about important department-wide initiatives such as If You See Something, Say Something™, the Blue Campaign, the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative, and the DHS's efforts in countering violent extremism. Whether we are expanding the distribution of timely and actionable information related to operations and intelligence or educating state and local law enforcement about DHS programs and initiatives, we are tirelessly working on behalf of our partners to keep them updated and informed with the information they need to keep the United States safe.

Within DHS, the OSLLE also serves as the advocate and the voice for the nonfederal law enforcement community. We are responsible for ensuring that DHS leadership is aware of and considers the issues, the concerns, and the requirements of state, local, and tribal law enforcement during budget, grant, and policy development processes. As I stated in my oral testimony to the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence in February 2012, I believe this function was the intention of Congress when it created and named my office: the Office for State and Local Law Enforcement.

In addition to sharing information, my office is committed to proactively identifying and responding to the challenges facing the law enforcement community. For example, we are working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ensure that our partners are informed about and prepared to participate in the National Preparedness Grant Program, which takes effect in fiscal year 2013. We also are working with other DHS components to help educate and include state and local law enforcement in the development and the construction of the newly created Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network.<sup>2</sup>

My office also is committed to finding ways for our law enforcement partners to manage the current economic environment. As a former police chief, I know firsthand that training is usually the first casualty of tighter budgets. To assist our partners in identifying options to meet their current and future training requirements, we arranged for the leadership of the major law enforcement associations, including the IACP, to visit and tour the DHS Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, this past May. The visit provided FLETC Director Connie Patrick and her team the opportunity to brief the attendees on the resources, the capabilities, and the training programs that her state-of-the-art training facilities have to offer.

The OSLLE has reaffirmed its commitment to serving the needs of the nonfederal law enforcement community by expanding its staff over the last few months, adding five new team members, and creating four new divisions. We now give state, local, and tribal law enforcement unprecedented access to DHS's programs and initiatives, homeland security information, and guidance on training and grant opportunities.

Collaboration with our law enforcement partners is important to DHS's efforts to improve information sharing and enhance the United States' ability to identify, mitigate, and respond to emerging threats. I believe that we have made significant progress over the past several months, and we are now in a better position than ever before to accomplish our mission.

As the OSLE grows and evolves, we will continue our proactive outreach efforts by attending important law enforcement gatherings, training conferences, and meetings to stay abreast of the issues and the concerns of the law enforcement community.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership with DHS as we strive to keep the United States safe, secure, and resilient.

*Louis F. Quijas, Assistant Secretary, Office for State and Local Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

**Notes:**

[1] Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, Pub.L. 110-53.

[2] For more information on these or other DHS programs and initiatives, please contact the OSLE at 202-282-9545.