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Washington, D.C. - The U.S. House of Representatives yesterday approved H.R. 1139, the COPS Improvements Act, to restore the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. The bill will provide Mississippi's First Congressional Districts with hiring grants estimated to put 163 community police officers on North Mississippi streets, and 656 officers statewide. The bill was approved by a wide bipartisan majority of 342-78.

"The COPS program has shown proven success in making communities safer," said Congressman Childers. "This legislation is even more important as tough economic times squeeze local police budgets and drive crime rates higher. These new officers would give Mississippi's police forces a much-needed boost."

The COPS Improvements Act is designed to put 50,000 additional police officers on U.S. streets over the next five years by authorizing \$1.25 billion a year for COPS hiring grants. It also authorizes \$350 million a year for COPS technology grants, and \$200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

Created in 1994, the COPS hiring grants program has been enormously successful, helping local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers from 1995 to 2005. Independent studies confirm that the COPS program contributed to the national crime rate reduction over this period of time.

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