



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 16, 2017

Trump Honors Law Enforcement by Proclaiming National Police Week

At the conclusion of a day during which he proclaimed May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and May 14 through May 20 as Police Week, President Trump ordered that the White House be illuminated in blue lights to honor our nation's law-enforcement officers.

Trump started the day on Monday by visiting the U.S. Capitol, where he issued his proclamation before those gathered for the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service held on the west lawn of the building. His proclamation stated, in part:



During Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, we honor the men and women of law enforcement who have been killed or disabled in the course of serving our communities. Police officers are the thin blue line whose sacrifices protect and serve us every day, and we pledge to support them as they risk their lives to safeguard ours.

Last year, 118 officers died in the line of duty, and of those, 66 were victims of malicious attacks. These attacks increased by nearly 40 percent from 2015. This must end. That is why one of my first actions was to direct the Department of Justice to develop a strategy to better prevent and prosecute crimes of violence against our Federal, State, tribal, and local law enforcement officers.

Trump stated that he and his wife would light the White House in blue on May 15 to honor our nation's police and they did so that evening.

Vice President Pence also spoke at the memorial service at the Capitol. He told those gathered that, on behalf of the president, it was his "privilege to welcome so many courageous men and women of law enforcement and especially the families of the fallen."

The *Washington Examiner* noted in an article about the presidential actions this week that following the attack on police officers in Dallas last July, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association Foundation asked then-President Obama to illuminate the White House in blue in honor of the five fallen officers. Obama ordered flags to be flown half-mast, but did not honor the police foundation's request.

During the previous month, Obama ordered that the White House be illuminated in rainbow colors following the Supreme Court ruling that allowed same-sex couples nationwide to marry.

The wave of attacks against police officers nationwide had prompted many demonstrations of support for those in law enforcement. Many people have displayed blue ribbons or banners on their houses and vehicles to show support for the police.

However, it was The John Birch Society — with which *The New American* is affiliated — that launched a national Support Your Local Police (SYLP) campaign as far back as 1963.



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The first articles explaining the need for Support Your Local Police Committees in *The John Birch Society Bulletin* in 1963 dealt with a phenomenon that has resurfaced in recent years — riots instigated by those attempting to foment racial disharmony in our nation's cities. A prime example of this type of unrest occurred in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, when violence erupted in the wake of a grand jury's decision not to indict Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown, a black teenager. The grand jury's decision was based on reliable testimony from witnesses. Nevertheless, the violence resulting from that decision quickly escalated into large-scale rioting. At one point, outside the Ferguson City Hall, crowds flipped a police cruiser on its side, broke out its windows, then set it on fire. Missouri Governor Jay Nixon ordered 400 additional National Guardsmen to Ferguson area, boosting their numbers from 700.

Similar anti-police riots existed back in the early 1960s. The founder of The John Birch Society, Robert Welch, wrote in the Society's July 1963 *Bulletin*:

This support of their local police by all good citizens everywhere is going to become especially important now that Communist-inspired racial riots are getting to be a regular part of the American scene. The police will be "crucified" by the Liberals, in the press and over the airwaves, for practically everything they do in the line of duty.

And this will be true no matter how circumspectly they handle themselves, nor with what careful restraint they use their authority, in connection with every large or small outbreak of civil disorder which the Communist plotters can produce.

One of the first objectives of the newly formed SYLP committees was to oppose the establishment of police review boards (often called "civilian" review boards, though the "civilians" behind them were usually leftist agitators). Robert Welch continued his article:

Among the more carefully plotted schemes for harassing the police, discrediting individual policemen, and discouraging all those who might want to do their duty, has been the setting up of Police Review Boards — to which many gullible do-gooders and bleeding hearts have been giving support. Their chief function, in practice anyway if not in theory, is to make every individual police officer scared to death, as to every action he takes even in dealing with vicious criminals in emergency situations, of being called before some board weeks or months later, and condemned with loss of pay or maybe loss of job, for having been too unkind to the poor wayward unfortunates who were about to shoot him in the back, or stamp in his face, when he tried to interfere with their waywardness.

By 1969, a second (and very important) phrase had been added to the name of the SYLP committees — "*And Keep Them Independent!*" This was in recognition of the fact that the ultimate goal of the communists and their allies who were orchestrating the widespread attack on our local police departments was not simply to destroy the police presence. Their goal was to render our local police departments ineffective (or at least to create the impression that they were ineffective) as justification for the federal government to step in to "rescue" those departments. At first, this would be done through federal aid to local police departments, followed by increasing federal control over those same departments. Ultimately, our local police forces would exist in name only and become mere administrative units of a national police force.

Robert Welch commented on this communist strategy in the JBS *Bulletin* for November 1969:

But the one aspect of this whole scheme with which we are most concerned here is the drive to



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destroy our local police forces, and to replace them with a national police force — in fact, if not in name — which is completely subject to control by the central government.

The SYLP Committees had many successes over the years, the most outstanding example being in the early 1960s, when the *Daily Worker*, an official Communist Party publication, blamed the man who organized these committees, former police officer James F. Fitzgerald, for getting rid of a civilian review board in New York City.

In 2016, The John Birch Society decided it was time to build upon and expand the success of the SYLP committees by instituting a new organization — the Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation, Inc.

The Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation (LECF) began based on ideas from Fitzgerald, a former Newark Police detective. His experience in law enforcement, as well as his decades of work to help preserve the American system of government, allows the foundation to have solid roots in identifying the educational and support tools needed to accomplish our mission, strive to our vision, and meet the needs of law enforcement.

As to what makes the LECF different from other foundations, the organization explains on its website:

Plenty of other great police charities and foundations exist, yet we focus on an educational need that will help to ensure the independence that law enforcement needs to best serve and be accountable to its local communities.

When The John Birch Society extended the name of the Support Your Local Police Committees by adding “*And Keep Them Independent!*” to their names back in 1969, it was to recognize an important principle. The attack on the police was motivated by the efforts of pro-totalitarians to put the police under the control of the federal government — not to eliminate them.

This week’s actions by President Trump and Vice President Trump to support our nation’s law-enforcement officers are both commendable and needed. But they address only the first half of what must be accomplished. To ensure that our local police departments remain under the control of each city and town, it is important for both police officers and the civilians who support them to see what SYLP and LECF have to offer and get on board.

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