

Why you should join FOP!

As the largest and most powerful police organization in the country and touting a membership in excess of 300,000 nationwide, the Fraternal Order of Police are here to support and defend the constitution of the United States. We promote loyalty, allegiance, as well as encourage and foster the enforcement of law and order. The Fraternal Order of Police attempts to improve the individual and collective proficiency of our members in the performance of their duties. We encourage fraternalism, educational, charitable, and social activities. We advocate and promote the uniform application of the civil service merit system for appointment and promotion, and endorse the improvement of the standard of living, and working conditions of the law enforcement profession through every legal and ethical means available.

The Garland Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #68 was formed in June of 1998 for the betterment of all police department employees. FOP has a rich history and long tradition of serving our nations law enforcement professionals. As a collective unit, we strive for the advancement of the law enforcement profession. We consistently seek to improve working conditions, wages, and benefits, as well as monitor and propose effective legislation.

We maintain traditional Esprit de corps, insure fidelity to duty under all conditions, and promote mutual helpfulness among our members and the people we serve. We endeavor to increase the efficiency of the law enforcement profession and firmly establish the confidence of the public in the service dedicated to the protection of life and property.

All too often FOP is synonymous with “police union”. Simply stated, this is and has always been the big question. The August 1st 2002 edition of the *Wall Street Journal* referred to the FOP as, “A police union with friends in the White House.” When I read this article, “It was then that I realized that we are finally being recognized for what we are – the most powerful police union in the country. Politicians are finally recognizing that we do vote and so does our family” **Ken Rocks – National Sergeant At Arms.**

There is and has been a debate within the ranks with one side saying, “*How can we be a union? Our constitution prohibits it.*” To clarify our position, the constitution prohibits us from **joining or being controlled** by any labor organization. **We are not prohibited from being a labor organization in our own right.** Most often the other side of the coin is, “*We are a fraternal organization, not a union.*” This is true on both counts. Many lodges in the northeast, south, and some in the west function as police unions in their respective jurisdictions, others simply serve as fraternal groups with an emphasis on labor. There is no doubt that the union vs. fraternal debate will continue for some time.

One of the biggest and most outrageous statements and misconceptions is that *some believe that in order to be a union you must be willing to strike.* Unionism is merely a state of mind. There is no need to be militant or go on strike. These are simply ploys to divide and conquer. Our own constitution prevents us from attempting to take this type of action, and was structured like this for a reason. The “Right to Work” is also a confusing issue. In some parts of the country where departments operate under a police contract, you **must** join the union or pay a fair share fee as a condition of continued employment. This is the cost of enjoying the same benefits as union members when a contract is negotiated. In Pennsylvania’s contract they implement an agency “shop clause”, which requires that non-FOP members to pay one dollar less than FOP members as a condition of employment. North Carolina declared, “*The right to live includes the right to work. The exercise of the right to work must be protected and maintained free from undue restraints and coercion. It is hereby declared to be the public policy of North Carolina that the right of persons to work shall not be denied or abridged on account of membership or non-membership in any labor union, organization, or association.*” (Enacted March 18, 1947)

As the President of our local lodge, I would encourage everyone to become a member of the FOP. The FOP was formed to work as a collective unit, as a voice and at the direction of the members. We strive to

accomplish common goals, which will improve our working conditions, wages, and benefits. It is vital to continue to stay unified. I feel that over the course of four years, we have proven that we are a professional organization, dedicated to presenting issues in the correct manner to various levels of the administration and city government. I believe that we have done an outstanding job representing the department, city, and FOP as a whole. There is no doubt that we will never please 100% of the people 100% of the time. I would hope that everyone realizes this. There are and will consistently be times when we must agree to disagree, then move on for the betterment of the organization. We are a melting pot of informative and dedicated professionals, all seeking to better our working environment and ourselves.

I would hope that we have shown and demonstrated over the past few years that we are not a “renegade” group, running wild through the streets. I’m sure in the opinion of some we may be looked at like this, but I would hope not. The plain and simple truth is this. There is strength in numbers. I feel like we proved this during the last budget process. For anyone who played a role in this would easily agree. Most often, the only question we are asked is “**What has FOP done?**” And “**What is FOP going to do for me?**” Below is a list of accomplishments that FOP has completed since our inception. I know that there are some who “*believe*” that FOP played no part in some aspects of the following accomplishments. Some even believes that the city was “going to *give* us that anyway.” If this is the case, I would ask those of you who feel like this to tell me of “anything” that the city has just “given” to us, without being initiated by us or any other entity first. I am hoping that as a whole, most are pleased with the job that we have done. It does at times get frustrating to have the same group of people attend every meeting and every function, every time. But, we have learned that if this is how it is going to be, then so be it. We will continue to march and move forward progressing more and more every day.

I do not want to discourage anyone from becoming a member simply because they cannot attend meetings or functions. I would rather have every employee of the department as a member even if they were only serving as a “number” and being counted. The equation is simple. It is easier for us to move forward with an issue when we have the “numbers” (members) to back it up. It is difficult to not allow members simply because they do not attend or become involved to the level of others. I completely understand that we all have families, children, and lives of our own to lead. Between sporting events, school functions, or church activities, we know that time is a precious commodity, and that most folks have very little of it to spare.

Accomplishments

- **20 year retirement**
- **Comp time not effecting sick time.**
- **Implemented a rifle policy.**
- **Increased the proposed staffing levels during the 2003-2004 budget process.**
- **Doubled the proposed raise from 2% to 4% for police and fire and from 2% to 3% for all city employees during the 2003-2004 budget process.**
- **Continue to bridge the gap between the rank and file and the administration by holding monthly meetings with Chief Wilson that allow us to better disseminate information.**
- **Continue to maintain a good working relationship with the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager for the betterment of wages and benefits.**
- **Raised and donated more than \$25,000 to the NYPD and New York Port Authority during the 9/11 relief efforts.**
- **Donated several thousands of dollars to members and non-members alike during family hardships and times of distress.**
- **Direct flowers to members and non-members alike during family events such as births, sickness, or deaths in the family.**
- **Established annual events in honor of Gerald Walker, Michael Moore, and Ronnie**

Lerma that were all killed in the line of duty.

- **Established a Police Benevolent Fund in cooperation with the surviving family members of Gerald Walker, Michael Moore, and Ronnie Lerma, which is to be used in the event of a line of duty death or serious bodily injury.**
- **Continue to aid the community in which we serve by hosting a number of events such as fingerprinting children, Motorcop for Kids, Thanksgiving Food Drive, and the Christmas Toy & Food Drive.**
- **Sponsor members in various events throughout the year such as. The Police Softball Team, Police Olympics, Motor Cross, Hotter Than Hell Bicycle Race, Players in the Gerald Walker Memorial Golf Tournament, GPD Shootout, Angel's In Blue 5K Walk/Run, Ronnie Lerma Car Show, FOP Easter Egg Hunt, and the FOP Annual Christmas Party, SWAT Training/Equipment, Telecommunications week, K9 Training/Equipment**
- **Maintain more than 95% of Patrol and more than 70% of department employees as members.**
- **After a long hard fought battle, the comp time policy in Dispatch & Jail has been overturned for the better.**
- **Established the first Auxiliary Lodge in the entire State of Texas allowing for family members of FOP members who wish to take an active roll.**

This list comprises just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the involvement that FOP is willing to take with you as a member. Our concerns have always been for the membership and direction we take is guided by the membership and this will continue to be how we operate. I would strongly encourage all department employees to become a part of FOP whether as a sworn member or non-sworn Associate member.

Even if you know that you cannot commit the time to stay active, attend meetings, or serve during any of the functions that we maintain then please consider being counted. Take a role in your future and be a voice regardless of whether it is unspoken or not. The fruits of your labors can be plentiful.

The cost for membership is the choice of each individual member. There are two options and you must simply decide which suits your needs. Membership is classified as having Legal Coverage or Non-Legal Coverage. If you are a sworn officer and do not have legal coverage through another group, I would highly recommend that you get yourself covered. No matter if you are working inside or not, legal coverage is crucial in this line of work. Its kind of like trying to buy car insurance after you have a car accident, it just doesn't work. You cannot go back and get legal coverage, once you have been sued or facing a legal battle.

Legal Coverage: \$25.00 a month or \$300.00 a year.

Non-Legal Coverage: \$14.00 a month or \$168.00 a year

All dues are paid in "one" of the following three ways only:

- Monthly electronic withdrawal from your personal checking or savings account
- Annually (September) \$300.00 for Legal Members and \$168.00 for Non-Legal Members
- Every six months (September & March) \$150.00 for Legal Members and \$84.00 for Non-Legal Members

Applications are attached and also available on the second floor of the police station at the FOP Bulletin Board for those interested.

Services	TMPA	CLEAT	FOP	IUPA
Million Dollar Coverage	Yes	No, but representatives claim that they will mortgage property to cover	No	No
Choice of Attorney	Yes	Yes If Approved	Yes	Yes If Approved
Administrative Suspension, Termination, Demotion, Promotion, Passover etc...	Yes	Maybe, does not cover promotional passover or legal fees from the medical condition of member	Yes	Max of 5 hrs prep h for pre & post termin Then 120 hrs "hea time" increases ye
Member Restrictions	Open to all law enforcement officers in Texas	Open to all, but must be a member of a local CLEAT associated chapter	Open to all law enforcement officers in the United States	Open to all, (exclud School District Po Officers are not cov
Civil	Yes	Yes	Yes	No expenses paid. 4 of pretrial & 400 h attorney time by 5 th
Criminal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No expenses paid. 4 of pretrial & 400 h attorney time by 5 th
Arbitration	Yes	Yes unless you work for a city that bargained for this right	Yes	No
Costs	\$20.00 a month <i>local dues not included</i>	\$24.00 a month <i>local dues not included</i>	\$25.00 a month local dues included	\$14.95 a mo <i>local dues not incl</i>