



GENE S. RYAN
President
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Fraternal Order of Police
BALTIMORE CITY LODGE No. 3

3920 BUENA VISTA AVENUE
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21211
Phone: (410) 243-9141
Fax: (410) 467-1643
Twitter: @FOP3



LISA M. RIHA
Secretary

To: Editorial Staff, Baltimore Sun

In your recent Editorial (“Monthly City Council meetings on police overtime are about 15 years overdue”, July 9, 2018) you very correctly named all of the fiscal years that ended with an inordinate amount of overtime spending by the Baltimore Police Department. We fully agree with your belief that 15 years of these huge overages requires that the Department’s disbursements must be audited and more tightly controlled.

What we cannot accept, however, is your premise that there is a toxic “culture of overtime” in the Department. That statement seems to blame our members for much of the problem and, to a certain extent, insinuates that our greediness is the reason that the City must dig itself out of this hole year after year. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. We know, as well as anyone, that there are a few bad apples in blue uniforms who have learned to abuse the overtime system and we commend the Department and the City for anything they can implement to stop such abuses. But to say that there is an ethos in our community that encourages and tolerates overtime abuses goes above and beyond the truth.

Like most Americans who work to support their families and educate their children, our members are no different. Yes, overtime pay does make it a bit easier, in many cases and, yes, we do have a few members who work extraordinary amounts of overtime as is exhibited each year when The Sun publishes its list of the highest paid Baltimore City employees. What we do not have, however, is a general philosophy that overtime is there for our benefit and should be used whenever possible. In fact, while the overtime costs might be rising, our members are spending less and less time with their own families; a situation they would rather not be in despite the money they might be making. In many cases, these extra hours worked are no longer voluntary but are mandatory to keep Patrol shifts at a required minimum number of officers.

No, ladies and gentlemen of the Sunpaper Editorial Staff, we are not the cause of the ever-rising increase in BPD overtime spending. We are the working stiffs who must pull off on the side of the road to catch a nap on the way home, so we don’t kill ourselves or others, after working 15 hours straight, often more than once in a four-day period.

The Baltimore City Council is right to meet regularly to attempt to control the situation and when they do, we can promise that the fault will not rest with our members but rather with the poor management and planning of the BPD. We, unfortunately at this point, are as much a victim as are the City taxpayers who must foot the bill.

Sincerely,
Lt. Gene Ryan
President, Baltimore City FOP, Lodge #3