



The Washington Report

The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations
Representing America's Finest

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NAPO's Efforts on CARES 2 Stimulus Bill

House Democrats continue to pull together their priorities for the next phase coronavirus stimulus package ("CARES 2") and NAPO is actively working to ensure the needs of our members are reflected in it. We sent a [letter to House leadership](#) outlining our priorities for the CARES 2 package:

- Establishing a presumption under the U.S. Department of Justice Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program that an officer's death or disability due to contracting COVID-19 is in the line of duty. NAPO strongly supports the intent behind H.R. 6509, the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act, sponsored by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler. We must ensure every public safety officer who contracts COVID-19 as a result of their service receive the benefits to which they are entitled.
- Increasing direct funding to local governments and law enforcement agencies to help pay or reimburse for all COVID-19 related overtime costs, additional sick and administrative leave, and hazard pay for officers in areas greatly impacted by the coronavirus. Providing overtime, additional sick leave and hazard pay will help ensure we are able to retain trained and experienced officers and law enforcement agencies are able to continue to serve and protect the public. Further, hazard pay will honor the bravery and sacrifice of our officers as they continue to serve our communities in this time of crisis.
- Increasing funding for the purchase of PPE for officers. Despite all the funding appropriated through the CARES Act, many officers across the nation still do not have adequate PPE. Some are given one face mask to reuse and a packet of hand sanitizer wipes, which is unacceptable.
- Repealing the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). With the continued spread of COVID-19, seniors and retirees are the most vulnerable population, both in regards to their health and retirement. The swift downturn of the stock market has no doubt impacted their retirement security and they need as much financial support as possible. This support can come swiftly in the form of increased Social Security benefits from a repeal of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

Until we are able to secure additional funding, it is important to note that the \$850 million appropriated through the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Fund (CESF) can be used to reimburse for the costs of PPE, overtime, additional COVID-related sick leave and hazard pay. The FEMA Disaster Assistance Fund and the [FEMA Public Assistance Program](#) can currently be used

to cover some of these costs as well. The State Administering Agency must apply for the FEMA funds.

NAPO also supports legislation like the Flexibility for Localities and Eligibility Expansion Act of 2020 (H.R. 6652) that would expand the permissible uses of funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund for localities and municipalities under 500,000 to allow for the offset of lost revenues or to cover budget shortfalls caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This bill focuses on localities no greater than 500,000 because they are currently not eligible for the Coronavirus Relief Fund. While NAPO supports this bill, we know that state and local governments big and small are struggling with budget holes and significant revenue losses due to the pandemic and the steps that had to be taken to protect the public. We have joined with all of the major national law enforcement organizations – labor and management – to call on Congress to give state and local governments direct access to additional, flexible funding in CARES 2 to help stave off public safety layoffs and furloughs and other budget cuts that would negatively impact public safety.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has stated that she expects to provide desperately needed resources for first responders and state and local governments in CARES 2. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer made clear he wants to see a “Heroes Fund” for first responders and robust aid for states and localities included in the next stimulus bill. While the White House has indicated it is on board with another stimulus bill with certain conditions, Republican Leadership in the House and Senate do not believe it is necessary at this moment and if they do take one up, it will be through regular order. We are working with both House and Senate staff to ensure all parties understand and support these pressing issues and the importance of getting additional aid out as quickly as possible.

NAPO President Presents to Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice

On April 27, NAPO President Mick McHale presented to the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice Working Group on Respect for Law Enforcement and the Rule of Law. McHale was asked to speak on the work he has done with the Florida Police Benevolent Association on a campaign with communities promoting “comply, *then* complain”. He took the opportunity to also touch on the work he has done to create a statewide mental health task force in Florida and the need for departments to be flexible with the education requirements necessary to qualify to be an officer.

McHale stated his sincere appreciation for the opportunity for NAPO to work with the Commission, the Department of Justice’s Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) Office, the Attorney General and other appropriate stakeholders to advance the goal of safer encounters, and a conscious, higher public satisfaction with America’s officers and agencies. The Attorney General has expressed great concern regarding how common it has become for persons in contact with the police to resist, obstruct, interfere, thwart and even attack officers. Mr. Barr said he would like to see the public encouraged to “comply, *then* complain.” McHale noted that in Florida, departments have had success engaging the community by utilizing the services of community leaders to educate their particular constituencies or congregations to do just this. Confrontations and obstruction go down, so long as the citizen believes that a complaint the next day will be treated seriously and evaluated fairly.

McHale emphasized the importance of police unions playing an active part in these liaisons as they represent the police officers who interact with these communities on a daily basis. It is the relationship between the community and the officers serving them that matters most. He also touched on the need to

incorporate safe environments for violent criminals to turn themselves in to police. This promotes officer and community safety and is a proven way to de-escalate potentially violent situations.

Further, as there has been a growing call from community leaders across the nation for police departments to hire more officers that reflect the makeup of the communities they serve, McHale noted that the requirement that candidates have a four-year college degree can be a hindrance to achieving that goal. He suggested that departments be more flexible in their education requirements by creating programs that allow individuals to become officers while working towards meeting the requirement. Departments can also use work experience to augment years in school to help potential candidates meet educational requirements. If departments want to look more like the communities they serve, they must provide opportunities for members of the community to become officers. This will improve community relations and lead to increased respect for officers on the street.

Before closing his presentation, McHale took the opportunity to once again advocate for peer-to-peer counseling for officers and highlight the Florida mental health task force that he and the Florida PBA worked to establish. Ensuring all officers have access to the supports and services they need for their mental health and wellness is vital for all police work.

McHale appreciated the opportunity to share these insights with the Working Group. NAPO looks forward to continue our work with the Commission to promote and protect our nation's law enforcement officers.

NAPO Supports Bill Establishing a PSOB Presumption that All COVID-19 Exposures in Line of Duty

NAPO strongly supports the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act (S.3607), introduced by Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA). Creating a presumption under PSOB that all COVID-19 related deaths or disabilities occurred in the line of duty is a top priority for us.

While the PSOB Program does cover line of duty deaths and disabilities due to infectious diseases, we feel strongly that COVID-19 is unique and presents its own challenges in proving line of duty exposure. While with most other infectious diseases, it is easy to pinpoint the source and details surrounding the exposure, but this situation is more difficult with the new coronavirus and its asymptomatic spread. Every day, we are learning more about COVID-19. First, it was believed it could only be spread by close human contact. Now, experts know that it can also be spread through the air. Individuals can be carriers of COVID-19 without being symptomatic. Our officers have found themselves in an extraordinary and dangerous situation over which they have very little control.

The Safeguarding America's First Responders Act intends to establish that COVID-19 shall be presumed to have been contracted as a result of the officer's service for the purposes of PSOB death benefits. As of May 4, 2020, 92 officers have died due to COVID-19 and thousands of officers have contracted the coronavirus, that we know of given the limited testing capabilities. It is essential that the families of the officers who have given their lives serving their communities during this pandemic receive the benefits they so rightly deserve.

NAPO also believes that a similar presumption must be made for PSOB disability benefits as we do not know the long-term effects COVID-19 will have on the officers who contract it. We look forward to working with Senator Grassley to ensure those who become permanently disabled due to contracting the coronavirus are eligible for PSOB disability benefits.

The Department of Justice, in an unusual move, formally came out in support of the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act, which will help secure broad Republican support for the bill. We are working with Senate leadership to set up a vote on this bill next week for National Police Week.

NAPO Priorities Move in Senate Ahead of National Police Week

The Senate is back in session, but not yet back to regular order. Despite that, NAPO is working with Senate Judiciary Committee staff to move three of our priority bills for National Police Week. As the Committee is not yet holding markups, Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC) circulated to Committee members the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act (S. 3607), the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act (S. 2746) and the COPS Counseling Act (S. 3434) to be unanimously discharged. If there are no objections from members, the Committee will approve the bills and the Senate will vote on them by unanimous consent next week.

The **Safeguarding America's First Responders Act** would establish a presumption under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program that an officer's death or disability due to contracting COVID-19 is in the line of duty.

The **Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act** would require the Department of Justice to establish a program to collect data on law enforcement and former law enforcement suicides at the local, State, and Federal level.

The **COPS Counseling Act** would implement confidentiality standards for federal law enforcement peer support counseling programs and direct the U.S. Attorney General to report on best practices and professional standards for state and local peer support counseling programs.

These three bills have broad bipartisan support, which increases the likelihood of them passing by unanimous consent in the Senate. Our other priorities that do not have such widespread support or are more controversial will have to wait until Senate committees begin to consider and mark up legislation again.

NAPO feels strongly that despite the circumstances we find ourselves in due to the pandemic, we must still recognize National Police Week and honor those law enforcement officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and support those who are still serving and protecting our communities. It is even more important to do that now, during this national crisis. We urged Committee members to support these bills and vote to discharge them to the Senate floor for passage next week.

The 27th Annual TOP COPS Awards® Dinner: UPDATE

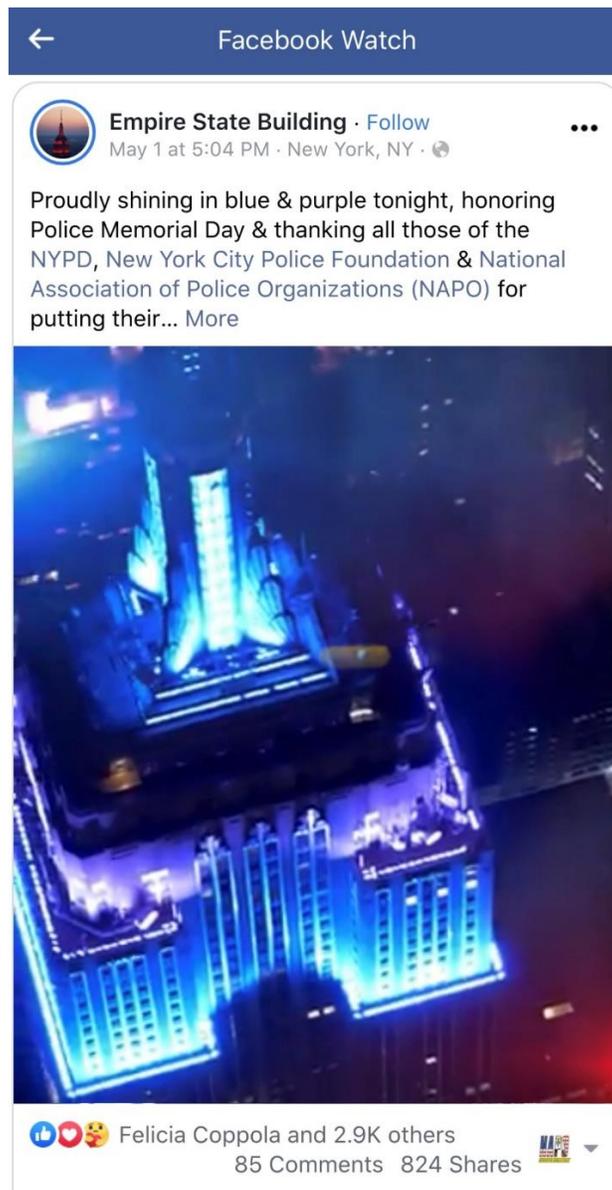
Thank you for your patience as we have worked through the details of rescheduling the 2020 TOP COPS AWARDS!

The 2020 TOP COPS Awards will be held on Sunday, October 18 at the JW Marriott Beach Resort in Marco Island, Florida. The Awards Dinner will be held in conjunction with the NAPO's previously scheduled Attorney Seminar.

Formal Invitations will be mailed in early June. Information can also be found on the [NAPO website](#) and will be updated as information is available. If you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at (703) 549-0775.

NYC Police and NAPO Honored by Empire State Building

On May 1, the Empire State Building was lit up in blue and purple to honor Police Memorial Day and thank all of the officers of the New York City Police Department, the New York City Police Foundation and NAPO for continuing to serve the City during the pandemic. NAPO is proud to stand with our members of the NYPD and those serving communities across the country as they show the nation what bravery and sacrifice is on a daily basis.



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