



The Washington Report

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

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NAPO Meets with BJA and OJP Leadership to Discuss Law Enforcement Grant Programs

On October 17, NAPPO met with Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katie Sullivan, the head of the Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs (OJP), and Tracy Trautman, the Acting Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and a handful of other national law enforcement organizations for a frank discussion of what's working and not working for the field regarding state and local law enforcement grant programs run through the BJA.

The conversation focused around making grant programs more accessible to their intended audience and streamlining the grant process to make finding and applying for a BJA grant less onerous. Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Sullivan stated that it was the Attorney General's and her priority that state and local law enforcement are able to get their hands on the funding, support and resources they need and are not stymied by red tape and bureaucracy. Restructuring how OJP and BJA provide technical assistance was also part of that discussion to ensure that funding for that was being used in the most efficient and effective way.

Lastly, we discussed support for officer mental health and wellness programs, which continue to be a priority for the Attorney General, and how BJA's grants can be most effective in meeting officers' and departments' needs.

NAPO appreciates the ability to participate in such open discussions around our priority grant programs and thanks Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Sullivan for her leadership in working to ensure grant programs are actually getting to and meeting the needs of state and local law enforcement.

President Establishes Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice

On October 28, President Trump signed an Executive Order establishing a Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. The Commission will study issues related to law enforcement and the criminal justice system and make recommendations to the Attorney General on actions that can be taken to prevent, reduce, and control crime, increase respect for the law, and assist victims. The Attorney General must submit a report with recommendations to the President within one year of the enactment of this Executive Order.

Issues to be reviewed by the Commission include:

- Challenges to law enforcement associated with mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse, and other societal factors;
- Recruitment, hiring, training and retention of law enforcement officers;
- Potential for public and private initiatives to reduce crime and improve police-community relations;
- Refusals by State and local prosecutors to enforce laws or prosecute categories of crime;
- Safety, health and wellness of law enforcement officers;
- Need to promote public respect for the law and law enforcement officers;
- Training;
- Better integration of education, employment, social services, and public health services to reduce crime and ease the burden on law enforcement, the courts and corrections systems;
- Challenges and opportunities of technical innovations for law enforcement and the criminal justice system; and
- Effectiveness of federal grant programs.

Attorney General Barr will appoint a chair to head the Commission as well as determine the composition of the Commission and how it will function.

NAPO applauds the President for creating this Commission to look at the needs of the law enforcement community, rank-and-file officers, and the criminal justice system at large and make recommendations to improve how we prevent, deter and reduce crime and violence in our communities and protect the public safety. It is important that this Commission embraces the law enforcement perspective, including that of rank-and-file officers, and we thank President Trump for recognizing the important role law enforcement plays in shaping the future of the system.

The full text of the Executive Order can be found here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-commission-law-enforcement-administration-justice/>

NAPO Endorses WEP Reform Legislation

NAPO pledged its support to the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act (H.R. 4540), introduced by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal (D-MA). This bill would reform the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) to reduce its impact on public employees' Social Security benefits. The bill would create a new formula – the Public Servant Protection (PSP) formula – designed to more accurately account for years a public employee paid into Social Security versus the years paid into a public pension system in a non-Social Security covered position. The PSP would only apply to individuals who are receiving a pension from a non-Social Security covered position *and* have less than 30 years of substantial work in Social Security covered employment. It would maintain all current WEP exemptions.

The PSP would start for new retirees as of 2022, and individuals would receive the higher of the two formulas – the PSP or the current WEP. Current retirees and those becoming eligible for Social Security before 2022 would receive a monthly payment of \$150 to lessen the impact of the WEP. However, if the impact of the WEP is less than \$150, the retiree would receive the amount by which the WEP reduced their Social Security benefit.

A similar bill, the Equal Treatment for Public Servants Act, was introduced by Ranking Member Kevin Brady (R-TX). While the Equal Treatment for Public Servants Act is comparable in terms of the new formula, it would eliminate the WEP exemption, which is a big concern for NAPO.

NAPO believes the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act is the best option to reform the WEP and ensure no public safety retiree is left behind. We are working with Committee staff to get Republican cosponsors to the bill. While WEP repeal remains our number one objective, this legislation is giving us the opportunity to provide wide-spread education of the harm the WEP does to public safety retirements.

Please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org if you have any questions about either WEP reform legislation. NAPO will keep our members updated on the status of both bills and our efforts to repeal the WEP.

NAPO'S 32nd Annual Pension & Benefits Seminar

Register by December 1 for our Early Bird Rate

We invite you to join NAPO for our 32nd Annual Police, Fire, EMS & Municipal Employee Pension & Benefits Seminar to be held at Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, **January 26 – 28, 2020**. Participate in discussions on the pressing topics that are affecting your pension fund and benefits.

Topics will include: economic and political updates, asset allocations, alternative investments, plan administration in the digital age, balanced portfolios, healthcare and retirement, just to name a few!

Take an active role in improving your fund by registering for this informative seminar. The Registration Brochure is attached and check out NAPO's website at <http://www.napo.org/events/upcoming-events/2020-pension/> for the most up-to-date agenda or to register [online](#).

If you have any questions or need additional information please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, at eloranger@napo.org or (703) 549-0775. We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas!

NAPO on the Hill: GPO & WEP Repeal, Collective Bargaining

GPO & WEP Repeal

NAPO is engaging in a cosponsor push for the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 141) to help move it forward in the House. This legislation, which would totally repeal both the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), continues to be a top priority for NAPO.

NAPO reached out to the offices of those members who cosponsored the bill last Congress but have not yet signed on this Congress as well as freshman members of Congress who have not cosponsored and need to be educated on the importance of this vital legislation. The Social Security Fairness Act currently has 213 bipartisan cosponsors and it is our goal to get to 290 to force a vote on the House floor, much like we did with the Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act in July.

Though most police officers must retire after specific time served, usually in their early- to mid-fifties, many look for new opportunities to serve their community. Yet, when they retire from a non-Social Security paying job and move to one that does pay into Social Security, they are penalized by the WEP. Instead of receiving full support from their rightfully earned Social Security retirement benefit, their pension heavily offsets it, thus vastly reducing the amount they receive.

More troubling is the effect of GPO on a police officer's retirement. If a spouse who paid into Social Security dies, the surviving public safety officer should be eligible for half of the deceased's benefit. However, GPO requires that this amount be offset by two-thirds of the survivor's pension, eliminating most or all of the payment. By professional need, many police officers are outside of Social Security but if they had not served at all, they would receive the full allotment of the spouse's benefit.

GPO and WEP were meant as a "leveling" response but only serve to hurt public safety officers. By totally repealing both GPO and WEP, the Social Security Fairness Act would preserve the retirement security of those who selflessly serve and protect our communities.

To find out if your representative has signed on as a cosponsor to H.R. 141 or to get information about the bill, contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

Public Safety Collective Bargaining

NAPO is working with House Education and Labor Committee staff to move forward our Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (H.R. 1154). The Committee is considering moving either the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act or the broader Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 3463), which covers all public employees, including public safety. We are actively urging Committee members to support moving our bill forward, with or without the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, and pushing them to cosponsor H.R. 1154 if they have not already.

While we have no issue with the Committee moving forward the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, we strongly believe that our bill is better for public safety and has a stronger chance of moving. The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act has 196 bipartisan cosponsors.

The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act will guarantee that law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical service workers in all 50 states have the right to discuss workplace issues with their employers. It will provide a framework for such discussions, while respecting the right and flexibility of states to write their own laws for public safety workers. This legislation will not overturn current collective bargaining laws – it will only provide the basic right of collectively bargaining over wages, hours, and working conditions to those who currently do not have them.

NAPO strongly feels that the public safety is best protected through effective partnerships between first responders on the front lines and the agencies that employ them. This legislation will ensure that public safety officers can meet with local officials to discuss how they do their jobs and how best to protect the public.

If you would like to join this effort and ensure your Congressional Representative is supporting the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO in the News

On October 21, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson was quoted in a *Washington Free Beacon* article entitled, “Police Groups Slam Beto’s Plan to Send Cops to Collect Americans’ Guns”. The article focuses on law enforcement’s response to Democratic presidential candidate Beto O’Rourke’s plan to send officers to enforce his “mandatory buyback” proposal for high-powered rifles and collect the AR-15s and AK-47s from those who refuse to turn them in.

Johnson had strong words for O’Rourke’s unconstitutional proposal:

"It's ironic that Beto O'Rourke, who was slamming police as 'the new Jim Crow' just a year ago, now finds a need for police when he wants to disarm individuals. Maybe poor Beto should spend less time live-streaming his visits to the dentist and attend a basics civics class instead. He'd be reminded that the very first law every police officer swears to uphold is the Constitution."

The full article can be found here: <https://freebeacon.com/politics/police-groups-slam-betos-plan-to-send-cops-to-collect-americans-guns/>

NAPO will continue to ensure our members’ voices are heard loud and clear on the Hill, with the Administration, and in the media. If you have any questions about the publication cited above, please contact Bill Johnson at: bjohnson@napo.org.

NAPO Endorses Bill to Improve Mental Health Services and Law Enforcement Resources to Reduce Mass Violence

NAPO endorsed the Restoring, Enhancing, Strengthening, and Promoting Our Nation’s Safety Efforts (RESPONSE) Act, introduced by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), which would provide for and expand access to mental health services, give new tools to law enforcement and bolster school safety with the goal of preventing future mass violence.

Among the mental health and criminal justice provisions in the bill is language to bolster funding to state and local law enforcement grant programs that help them partner with mental health service providers to provide mental health treatment and an increase in the ability of states and localities to access crisis intervention teams.

The bill also includes new tools for law enforcement to help prevent mass shootings, including a provision that clarifies that internet service providers and online platforms have the authority to share information with law enforcement concerning hate crime, acts of mass violence or domestic terrorism. It would also create nation-wide federal, state and local task forces to investigate and prosecute illegal, unlicensed firearms dealers and it would expedite the death penalty for individuals who commit terrorist mass violence. It also expands access to active shooter training for first responders.

The RESPONSE Act bolsters and increases the availability of proven tools to help law enforcement prevent and respond to acts of violence, from interactions with persons experiencing mental health crises to mass shootings. NAPO thanks Senator Cornyn for his continued support of law enforcement and we look forward to working with him to pass the RESPONSE Act.

House Passes Debbie Smith Act Reauthorization

On October 23, the House passed the Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act (H.R. 777) by a vote of 402-1. The Debbie Smith Act was originally signed into law in 2004 to provide much needed resources to state and local agencies to end the DNA backlogs for unsolved crimes, analyze DNA samples, and increase the capacity to process DNA samples in order to prevent future backlogs. The authorization for the Debbie Smith Act ran out on September 30.

Since its enactment, the Debbie Smith Act has provided state and local agencies the funding necessary to reduce the convicted offender and forensic evidence backlogs, solve cold cases using DNA, develop and implement forensic training, and perform research and development. The Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act would authorize \$151 million in grants to states and localities to assist with testing DNA evidence, including employee training and lab equipment to increase their testing capacity.

The Senate passed its version of the Debbie Smith Act (S. 820) by unanimous consent on May 16. The House and Senate will have to go to conference to negotiate the differences between the two versions of the bill or the Senate could take up and pass H.R. 777.

NAPO's Legislative Positions & Sponsor/Cosponsor Updates

NAPO's updated "Sponsor/Cosponsor" spreadsheet is available at the following link: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/sponsor-cosponsor-spreadsheet/>. The spreadsheet accompanies the latest "Legislative Positions" document, which is available at the following link: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/legislative-priorities/>. NAPO's Legislative Positions is a document that highlights all the legislation that we have taken an official position on or are monitoring during the 116th Congress. It is continually updated to reflect the work we are doing on Capitol Hill.

The "Sponsor/Cosponsor" spreadsheet is a useful tool to check if your members of Congress have supported pieces of legislation that will impact our members. NAPO updates this spreadsheet regularly and continues to ensure our voice is heard on Capitol Hill.

If you have any questions about any of the legislation that NAPO is currently working, please contact Andy Edmiston at: aedmiston@napo.org.

If you have any questions about the issues or legislation discussed in this issue of the Washington Report, contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0775. Please monitor NAPO's website, www.napo.org, and Facebook page: National Association of Police Organizations, and follow us on Twitter at NAPOpolice for breaking news and updates.