



The Washington Report

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

April 29, 2019

NAPO Meets with COPS Director

On April 12, NAPO's Executive Director Bill Johnson and Governmental Affairs Director Andy Edmiston met with the Director of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, Phil Keith, to discuss NAPO's priorities for the year and how we can best support each other in moving those priorities forward.

NAPO has long supported the COPS Office, particularly the COPS Hiring Program, as a vital resource for state and local law enforcement. In recent years, the COPS Office has taken on additional NAPO priorities such as the National Blue Alert Network, the Officer Safety and Wellness Working Group, and the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. This year, NAPO received a grant from the COPS Office to help us magnify the message of NAPO's 26th Annual TOP COPS Awards® Dinner to help combat the negative public discourse around policing.

NAPO continues to push Congress to adequately fund the COPS Program and the grant programs within it and we are working with Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) to introduce bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the program at \$400 million for five years.

NAPO appreciates the support of the COPS Office and the work that we do with them. Director Keith stated he appreciates NAPO's close relationship with the Office and that they are here to help in any way possible. The collaborative relationship between NAPO and the COPS Office has helped us move many of our priorities forward and we look forward to continuing that work.

COPS Office Releases Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Reports

On April 17, the Department of Justice released the two reports from the COPS Office that were required under the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act, which was enacted in 2017. This bill was a priority for NAPO and we worked closely with the COPS Office on the two reports: [Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress](#) and [Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs: Eleven Case Studies](#). The reports are attached.

The two reports highlight the needs of the law enforcement community when it comes to ensuring officers are able to address their emotional and mental wellbeing. We strongly believe these reports will be instrumental in helping us move Congress to provide more funding and resources for officer mental health and wellness programs.

If you have any questions or want more information on these reports, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO Participates in DOJ Law Enforcement Working Group Meeting

NAPO participated in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Law Enforcement Working Group (LEWG) meeting, which was led by Associate Deputy Attorney General Steve Cook. Along with NAPO, the Working Group consists of representatives of other national law enforcement organizations and DOJ staff and it meets quarterly to discuss relevant issues facing officers in the streets and how the DOJ can best assist its state and local law enforcement partners.

Topics discussed included asset forfeiture; health and wellness programs for law enforcement officers, including updates on where the Department is on implementing the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act; the successes achieved in reducing violent crime in our major cities due to Project Safe Neighborhoods; an update on the implementation of the FIRST STEP Act; and a presentation by the DEA on its efforts both nationally and internationally to fight the opioid epidemic. We also spoke about the Department's Back the Blue Initiative and how the Department can help the law enforcement community combat the negative discourse about police that runs rampant across the country.

We look forward to continuing the work of the LEWG and ensuring federal, state and local law enforcement and prosecutors remain strong partners in the fight against crime, guns and drugs in our nation's communities.

NAPO Supports Bill to Improve PSOB Disability

NAPO worked with Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Kirstin Gillibrand (D-NY) to introduce the Protecting America's First Responders Act (S. 1208), which would make it easier for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty to qualify for the Public Safety Officer's Benefits (PSOB) Program's disability benefits, in addition to several other important programmatic changes.

Senator Grassley has been very vocal about the unfair and inconsistent application of the program's "very stringent requirements" for officers disabled in the line of duty. He and Senator Gillibrand share our concerns that the stringent requirements for PSOB disability benefits make it extremely difficult for officers to qualify, and that the PSOB regulations regarding disability benefits do not match up with what Congress intended when it created the disability benefit in 1990.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program was designed to offer peace of mind to men and women seeking careers in public safety and to make a strong statement about the value that American Society places on the contributions of those who serve their communities in potentially dangerous circumstances. The current state of the PSOB Program, however, does little to instill confidence in officers that the federal government will do its part to take care of them should they become disabled in the line of duty, which is why the Protecting America's First Responders Act is so important.

This legislation will ease the strict requirements for disabled officers to qualify for PSOB disability benefits, ensuring that officers who are catastrophically injured in the line of duty, but can perform some level of meaningful work, would still qualify for the much-needed benefit. To start, officers who become quadriplegic, paraplegic, or blind due to the line of duty injury will automatically qualify for the PSOB disability benefit. The bill would also make the PSOB work restrictions more in line with those of Social Security Disability. Disabled officers have been left behind and this bill will ensure they are not forgotten.

Additionally, the Protecting America's First Responders Act will also help protect the ability of survivors, disabled officers and their families to get the benefits they so rightly deserve. It will ensure that beneficiaries receive the highest award amount possible and it will make certain that all children of public safety officers

disabled or killed in the line of duty are able to benefit from the Public Safety Officers' Education Assistance program.

We are working with Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and his staff to have the Committee mark up the bill in the next two weeks in order that we can move it to the Senate floor for a vote during National Police Week. NAPO will keep our members updated on the bill's status.

We are also working with Representatives Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) and John Rutherford (R-FL) on introducing the House companion bill prior to Police Week. We thank Senators Grassley and Gillibrand and Representatives Pascrell and Rutherford for their continued support of the law enforcement community, and we look forward to working with them to see the Protecting America's First Responders Act become law.

Last Chance to Register!

NAPO's 2019 Lobby Day Legislative Breakfast & Legislative Awards Luncheon

Don't miss out on the chance to join NAPO on May 14, 2019 for our Legislative Day on Capitol Hill. Use this opportunity to lobby Congressional Representatives and Senators on behalf of your members concerning the issues which affect law enforcement. Prior to lobbying Capitol Hill, plan to attend NAPO's Legislative Breakfast for an update on NAPO's legislative priorities, results to date from the 116th Congress, and to receive handouts to use during your Hill visits.

While on Capitol Hill be sure to stop by NAPO's Legislative Awards Luncheon, where several Representatives and Senators will be recognized for their continued support of Law Enforcement.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Registration	Omni Shoreham Hotel	8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Legislative Breakfast	Omni Shoreham Hotel	9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Capitol Hill Visits	Capitol Hill	10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
NAPO Legislative Awards Luncheon	Room G11 Senate Dirksen Office Building	12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Capitol Hill Visits	Capitol Hill	2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For assistance setting up your Capitol Hill appointments, contact Andy Edmiston, NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, at (800) 322-6276 or aedmiston@napo.org, by Friday, May 3 at the latest.

You can register [online](#) or using the attached registration form.

Advanced Registration is Required to attend NAPO's Legislative Awards Luncheon. Please contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, for additional information on the Legislative Breakfast or Legislative Luncheon at (800) 322-6276 or eloranger@napo.org.

NAPO Supports the Tax Fairness for Workers Act

NAPO has pledged its support to the Tax Fairness for Workers Act (H.R. 2103 / S. 1026), introduced by Representative Conor Lamb (D-PA) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA). This legislation would reinstate itemized deductions for work-related out-of-pocket expenses and make union dues an above the line deduction.

Like many public servants, law enforcement officers serve our nation and our communities for modest wages and often have to pay for mandatory and necessary equipment and resources out-of-pocket. An officer is responsible for his or her uniform maintenance and replacement, which averages \$500 - \$1000 per year. He sometimes must purchase his service weapon, ammunition, pay for training at a gun range and buy a gun safe to store his weapon at the cost of \$600 – \$1,500 per year. The officer may also be required to have a cell phone but is not provided one by the department. A phone can cost anywhere from \$400 - \$1,200 per year, depending on the type of phone or plan. This is much more than any employer has the right to ask an employee to pay out-of-pocket for things that are necessary for safely and effectively doing their job.

Prior to the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (H.R. 1) in 2017, law enforcement officers were able to offset these substantial costs by deducting them from their taxable income. The elimination of these itemized deductions put an unfair financial burden on officers, who give up so much to protect and serve our communities. The Tax Fairness for Workers Act will amend this wrong by reinstating the deductions for work-related out-of-pocket expenses.

NAPO is proud to support this legislation and we look forward to working with Representative Lamb and Senator Casey to pass it.

NAPO Participates in FEMA Roundtable on Collaboration and Emergency Management

NAPO participated in a Law Enforcement and FEMA roundtable to discuss the integration of law enforcement as a critical partner in emergency management and the need to create collaborative opportunities. FEMA looks at state and local law enforcement as a vital partner in moving its individual and community preparedness initiatives and it wants to position itself as a partner that can help the law enforcement community better prepare itself for critical incidents.

Much of the discussion was focused on the need for enhanced training for officers in emergency response, the importance of having a critical incident command system, the need for better policies regarding incident command and roles, and the vital importance of interoperable communications. The theme throughout the discussion was that first responders and FEMA should be proactive and not just reactive when it comes to disaster preparedness. The biggest obstacle to all of this is funding, which NAPO pointed out to the FEMA officials in the room. With grant funding significantly down from what it was just after September 11, 2001, and police departments continuing taking on additional national security duties, more federal resources are necessary to ensure departments are thoroughly prepared for a critical incident. The federal government cannot ask state and local law enforcement to take on a larger role in national emergency management without providing the funding and resources needed to equip and train departments and officers for those tasks.

This meeting was the first of its kind and NAPO believes it is a good first step in moving this conversation forward. State and local law enforcement are our nation's first responders and it is important that they are supported and have a collaborative relationship with FEMA.

NAPO on the Hill: 116th Congress Priorities

NAPO met with the staff of Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), the co-chair of the Senate Law Enforcement Caucus to discuss our priority legislation for this Congress. Specifically, we discussed the legislation we want to see movement on or passed during National Police Week.

We discussed the Protect and Serve Act, which will enhance officer safety by increasing penalties for the murder, attempted murder, or assault of state and local law enforcement officers, permanent reauthorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program, the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Reauthorization of the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund Act, legislation to fix the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program as it relates to 9/11-related health conditions, reauthorization of the COPS Program, and the STOIC Act.

Senator Blunt has always been supportive of our efforts to move key pieces of legislation during National Police Week and his staff indicated they would help us in any way they can. While we will not get all our priorities moved during Police Week, we believe we have several bills that are positioned to either have committee action that week or be taken up on the House and Senate floor for a vote. NAPO continues to work with key House and Senate staff to ensure those bills move forward.

If you have any questions about NAPO's meetings on the Hill or the issues addressed, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO on the Hill: Cosponsor Push for Public Safety Collective Bargaining

The House Education and Labor Committee has indicated that it is interested in having a hearing on the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (H.R. 1154), in conjunction with a broader conversation on public sector collective bargaining, sometime during the summer. In order to improve the chances of the Committee acting on this important bill, staff indicated that we need to get approximately 100 cosponsors. NAPO is meeting with past cosponsors of the legislation in efforts to get them to sign on once again as well as meeting with new members of Congress to educate them on the importance of public safety officers being able to bargain collectively. The bill currently has 52 bipartisan cosponsors.

Currently, many states do not allow public safety employees the fundamental right to bargain with their employers. History shows that denying workers the right to bargain collectively causes poor morale, the waste of resources, unfair and inadequate working conditions, and low productivity. Ultimately, it is the public's safety and security that is jeopardized by such poor working conditions for police.

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's Latest 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/>

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 will update this spreadsheet regularly, and continue 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.

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.