



The Washington Report

The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations

Representing America's Finest

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NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

NAPO's Executive Director Meets with Attorney General Holder

NAPO's Executive Director, Bill Johnson, joined other law enforcement groups in a meeting with Attorney General Eric Holder, Jr. on December 3, 2013. The meeting was part of an ongoing series of meetings to discuss the national law enforcement situation and the administration's goals. NAPO and the national Fraternal Order of Police were the only rank-and-file groups in attendance. Mr. Holder gave an update on federal drug prosecutions in Colorado and Washington State, as a follow up to concerns expressed over the administration's policy announcement on marijuana cases in the wake of those two states legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana.

Johnson participated in an in-depth discussion on the benefits/costs of a nation-wide crime commission, similar to one empanelled during the Johnson administration. Discussions focused on members, powers, fact-finding, timelines, and recommendations. The big question to be answered is whether or not there is a need for an overarching, national framework for the criminal justice system in the United States. NAPO worked diligently on this issue in the last Congress, initially supporting legislation by then-senator Jim Webb (D-VA) to create a commission, but then opposing additional language which would have added the ACLU and former convicts and inmates to the commission. NAPO will continue to keep our members informed on this issue as it progresses.

Additionally, the group discussed the ongoing federal government sequestration of funds, and the A.G. indicated that he thought it might only get worse in 2014, since in 2013 the Department of Justice was able to move some money around from one program to another to minimize the impact of funding cuts, but would not be able to do so again next year. There was discussion about whether or not this would be an area where both labor and management could agree that federal assistance was necessary. While NAPO is perfectly willing to work with any other group in support of our legislative goals, Johnson was careful at the meeting to point out that we are still a labor group at heart, and that while funding is needed, we feel most strongly that the funding has to go to retain and hire the men and women who actually do the job, and the workers who do the job have to be priority one. Studies and equipment demonstrations and exercises can all be useful, but they are no substitute for the man or woman on the line enforcing the law. Hiring and retention and support for the people who actually do the job will remain our number one focus, no matter who we are called upon to work with.

Johnson's participation in this meeting highlights that NAPO is well respected by the major decision makers when it comes to law enforcement issues and labor issues in the United States.

NAPO Participates in PSOB National Partners Group Meeting

NAPO participated in a Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) National Partners Group meeting on December 2, 2013. Speakers included: Denise O'Donnell, Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance; Suzie Sawyer, Acting Executive Director, Concerns of Police Survivors; Ron Siarnicki, Executive Director, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation; and Hope Janke, Director, PSOB Office.

During the meeting, Director O'Donnell outlined efforts to streamline the PSOB Program claims process. Over the past several months, the legal review process has been streamlined; processing times and procedures have improved; the number of documents required upfront when filing a claim has been reduced; and the claims process is being transferred to a paperless system. Ms. Janke also noted that the recently enacted Dale Long PSOB Act has allowed adult children to be eligible beneficiaries. Additionally, the Dale Long Act has led to positive changes related to education assistance for survivors.

NAPO will continue to maintain close contact with the PSOB office and keep our members apprised of changes and improvements to the PSOB system.

NAPO Participates in National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund Meetings

NAPO's Executive Director, Bill Johnson, participated in a National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) Names Committee Meeting on December 11, 2013 and a NLEOMF Board Meeting on December 12, 2013. NAPO is a founding member of the NLEOMF. NAPO's efforts led to the successful passage of legislation to establish the Memorial, which is the nation's monument to law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. Dedicated on October 15, 1991, the Memorial honors federal, state, and local law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and protection of our nation and its people.

NAPO has made the NLEOMF a top priority, and we will continue to keep our members informed of updates on the NLEOMF.

NAPO Briefing on Capitol Hill - Driver's Privacy Protection Act & Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act

Over the past week, NAPO has met with staffers for the following members of the House Judiciary Committee: **Ranking Member John Conyers (D-MI), Congressman Blake Farenthold (D-TX), Congressman Mel Watt (D-NC), Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Congressman Hank Johnson (D-GA), and Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN).** NAPO used each of the meetings to discuss our proposal to modify the recent amendment to the Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) and request support for the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act.

The DPPA requires state motor vehicle departments to receive permission from individuals before their personal motor vehicle record may be sold or released. The DPPA amendment authorizes a private right of action for knowing violations, and a court may award damages in the amount of \$2,500 for each time a record was accessed, as well as attorney fees and other litigation costs. Law enforcement officers are subject to these stringent punishments, even if they did not review files with criminal intent.

NAPO briefed each of the staffers on our proposed language modifications to the DPPA amendment, which include adding a clause that explains that penalties will be applied only if persons access information with the specific intent to secure an economic benefit. Also, NAPO proposes removing the \$2,500 penalty for a violation of this act, as well as adding a statement that explains there must be repeated disregard of this law for action to be taken. If the language is

not modified, law enforcement officers will be subject to large fines, and even the loss of their licenses for *de minimus* actions.

NAPO also discussed the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act, (sponsored by Congressman Michael Capuano (D-MA)), with each of the staffers. This legislation would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 by adding campus police officers to the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. This bill would define a "campus police officer" as a police officer who is authorized to enforce the criminal laws and is employed by an institution of higher education. The change would be retroactive to April 15, 2013 - the date of the Boston bombings. NAPO has worked closely with Congressman Capuano and his staff on efforts to add cosponsors to this legislation, currently supported by the entire Massachusetts delegation, and plans to continue these efforts to ensure the passage of this important bill.

NAPO will continue to aggressively lobby members of Congress to gain support for our proposed language changes to the DPPA amendment, as well as garner additional cosponsors to support the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act. We will keep our members updated on the status of these initiatives.

Parole for Murderer of NYS Trooper Denied

NAPO has learned that John Ruzas, who was convicted of second degree murder for the October 24, 1974 slaying of New York State Trooper Emerson Dillon, has been denied parole. NAPO has worked closely with the New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association over the past several months to ensure Ruzas remains in prison.

Trooper Dillon was shot in the heart by Ruzas while Ruzas was fleeing from a jewelry store robbery. When Ruzas murdered Trooper Dillon, Ruzas was already on parole from Attica for his role in two earlier, additional robberies. Mr. Ruzas has clearly demonstrated that he has no respect for the criminal justice system or the law enforcement officers who protect the public.

NAPO has worked with the President of the New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association, Tom Mungeer, to bring these facts to the attention of the New York State Parole Board. Our efforts were successful, as Ruzas will remain behind bars.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

YOUR NOMINATIONS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE FOR TOP COPS®

This year will mark the 21st year NAPO has produced the TOP COPS Awards®. The ceremony will take place on Monday, May 12, 2014, again coinciding with Police Week. Over the next few months I will be asking for your assistance in three major areas in which you, our members, can help to ensure the success of TOP COPS®: nominations, sponsorships, and show attendance. Today, I want to ask for your assistance with the first and most fundamental component, nominations.

TOP COPS® is unique in that it is a peer nominated award. However, one of the greatest struggles we have faced in the past is getting the nomination form out to officers nationwide. I am asking you to assist us in making this happen. **It is our goal this year to see all 50 states represented with a nominee.** While we appreciate and welcome nominations from the executive level, we would really like to see the nomination form circulated among *your* members.

The nomination form can be downloaded from the NAPO website, www.napo.org, and if need be, we would also be happy to email you the form. Just send us an email to info@napo.org with your request. Please feel free to duplicate and post it anywhere you feel it is appropriate. We would especially like to see forms posted in association offices and departments with the hope that your members will feel inclined to nominate the great cases/officers they have come into contact with

over the past year. I would also like to ask you to consider including the nomination form, on your website, or as a hand out at your next meeting.

If you have other thoughts or ideas as to how to get the word out about this most worthwhile event, please let us know. With your help and partnership, I know that TOP COPS® will be a tremendous success!

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.