NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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Executive Director

September 17, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Carper
Chairman
Homeland Security and Governmental
Affairs Committee
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Carper:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to submit this statement for the official record in response to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee's hearing on "Oversight of Federal Programs for Equipping State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies."

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

As the Committee examines the effectiveness of federal programs that provide surplus military equipment to state and local law enforcement agencies, we urge you to consider that programs, such as the Department of Defense's (DoD) 1033 Program, enable law enforcement agencies to fulfill equipment needs that they would otherwise be unable to afford. This equipment is vital to public safety, especially as criminals have become more violent and well armed in recent years.

Moreover, since 9/11, state and local law enforcement agencies have assumed more duties to protect communities against terrorist threats. The most recent and prominent example of the pivotal role state and local law enforcement play in protecting our nation's communities occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings. The surplus equipment provided through DoD's 1033 Program enabled state and local law enforcement officers to restore safety to the community. Eliminating such a program will inhibit the primary mission of law enforcement-to keep our communities safe.

Also, NAPO was disappointed to hear Committee member comments regarding our efforts to secure funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program. Since the beginning of the 108th Congress, NAPO has fought for increased funding for the COPS Hiring Program. We understand the importance of putting more officers on the street to build relationships with the communities they serve and maintain public safety, which is why we continue to expend all available efforts to promote community policing. In fact, it is our top priority.

Law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day to protect our communities. They must have access to every tool necessary to protect the public. The 1033 Program provides tools for officers to use to ensure public safety in the most dangerous of circumstances.

We urge you to utilize our organization as a valuable resource for the Committee as you review federal programs that play a valuable role in equipping state and local law enforcement agencies with necessary equipment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775. We look forward to working with you on this issue in the future.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson
Executive Director