



The Washington Report

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

December 1, 2023



Submit Your TOP COP Nominations Today!

*Don't let your TOP COPS nominations get lost in the holiday shuffle! The **January 12th** deadline for nominations will be here before you know it.*

Please take the time to nominate examples of outstanding police work for this prestigious award. We count on you, our members, to help us get the word about TOP COPS out and obtain nominations for officers nationwide. Join us in honoring America's Finest by nominating a case today. The nomination form is attached and can be found on our [website](#), and it must be postmarked or faxed to (703) 684-0515 by **January 12, 2024**. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact NAPO's Director of Events, Elizabeth Loranger, at elorange@napo.org or (703) 549-0775.

2024 will mark the 31st year that NAPO has hosted the TOP COPS Awards®. The TOP COP Awards® Dinner will take place Sunday, May 12 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, again coinciding with National Police Week. We look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C. this spring.

With your help and partnership, the TOP COPS Awards® will continue to be a tremendous success!

House Subcommittee Hearing on GPO & WEP Showcases Bipartisan Support for Repeal

The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a field hearing in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on November 20 on "Social Security's Disservice to Public Servants: How the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset Mistreat Government Workers". The hearing focused on the negative impact the WEP and GPO have on public retirees, including whether current retirees impacted by the provisions had any advanced notice or education on the GPO and WEP, and how these provisions affect their retirement security.

NAPO President Mick McHale submitted [testimony](#) urging action on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), which would totally repeal the GPO and WEP.

During the hearing, there was bipartisan recognition by the Subcommittee, as well as Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO), on the unfairness of the GPO and WEP on our nation's public servants. Chairman Smith pledged to continue working to find a bipartisan way to ensure public employees receive their promised retirement benefits, but he did not commit to moving H.R. 82.

While there was no firm commitment to repeal these unfair provisions, there was agreement that the field hearing is just a first step towards addressing the issues of the GPO and WEP. NAPO has long fought for the repeal of the GPO and WEP and we are diligently working to build on the momentum gained from this field hearing.

To help our efforts, the Committee needs to hear from you if you or a family member are impacted by the GPO and WEP. **The Committee is accepting comments from the public through close of business Monday, December 4. Please support our efforts by submitting comments now to WMSubmission@mail.house.gov** with the subject line "Social Security's Disservice to Public Servants: How the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset Mistreat Government Workers." You must submit your comments as a Word document attached to the email and be sure to include a list of all persons and/or organizations who are submitting the comments in the Word document. Your email must include your name, organization (if applicable), address, and telephone number. Please copy NAPO's Governmental Affairs Director, Andy Edmiston, at aedmiston@napo.org when submitting your comments.

Although the high cost of repeal was not mentioned during the hearing, it was evident it was on the mind of some of the Committee members who raised the possibility of WEP reform as a path forward. NAPO supports the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act (H.R. 4260), sponsored by Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA), which would repeal the current WEP formula, replacing it with a new Social Security benefit 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. This bill also would ensure that WEP reform would not further harm public safety officers' retirement benefits by including a benefit guarantee and maintaining the current WEP exemptions.

While NAPO supports the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act, we continue to prioritize our efforts on the full repeal of the GPO and WEP. We are pushing for the Committee to mark up H.R. 82 and build on the momentum of the November 20 hearing. We are also doing outreach in the Senate to build support for the Senate version of the Social Security Fairness Act, S. 597, sponsored by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME). S. 597 currently has 49 cosponsors, the highest number of cosponsors the bill has had in years. NAPO met with Senator Brown's staff this week about our efforts in the Senate.

We are determined to not let what happened last Congress happen again with this bill. While H.R. 82 has 300 bipartisan cosponsors, we are educating the remaining members of Congress who have not cosponsored it on how detrimental it is to public safety retirees and their financial security and working to build insurmountable support for repealing the GPO and WEP.

If you or a family member are impacted by the GPO and/or WEP and are willing to share your story to help our efforts, please email it to NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, Andy Edmiston, at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO Victory! Senate Passes Law Enforcement Trauma Kit Bill

In a victory for NAPO, the Senate passed the American Law Enforcement Sustaining Aid and Vital Emergency Resources (SAVER) Act (S. 2644) by voice vote on November 29. This bill, sponsored by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Chris Coons (D-DE), would help equip law enforcement officers with quality trauma kits so they can respond immediately and effectively if a civilian or fellow officer experiences a traumatic injury during a call.

NAPO supports this bill as it establishes baseline standards for trauma kits purchased through the Department of Justice's Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program, helping to ensure all officers have access to effective trauma kits that can save lives. While many departments are equipping or have already equipped their officers with quality trauma kits and trained them on their use, there are law enforcement agencies across the country where officers do not have access to such kits. With law enforcement being the first responders on a scene, giving officers access to high-quality emergency medical kits through Byrne JAG will save lives.

NAPO thanks Senator Cornyn, Whitehouse, Tillis, and Coons for their leadership and support. We are now focusing our efforts to moving the American Law Enforcement SAVER Act through the House.

NAPO on the Hill: NDAA, Recruit & Retain Act, HELPER Act

NDAA

Conference negotiations over the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (H.R. 2670) formally started on November 29. However, informal discussions have been going on between the leadership of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and they have reportedly hammered out the biggest differences between the House and Senate versions of H.R. 2670. NAPO has two significant priorities that were passed as part of the Senate version of the NDAA - the 9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act of 2023 (Section 1087) and the FEND Off Fentanyl Act (Title LXVIII) – and we continue to push for their inclusion in the final conference report.

We are circulating our November 15 [letter](#) to the leadership of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees urging the retention of these vital provisions in the final Conference Report of H.R. 2670 to conference committee members. Additionally, we joined with a coalition of law enforcement, advocacy, and victim organizations in [a letter](#) to House and Senate leadership on the importance of maintaining the FEND Off Fentanyl Act provision. Both the 9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act and the FEND Off Fentanyl Act are in jeopardy of being removed, despite their strong bipartisan support, due to internal politicking. The FY 24 NDAA will most likely be the last, must-pass legislation this year and members of Congress are trying to get their top legislative priorities included and are holding these provisions hostage to do so.

The final NDAA conference report is expected to be released as soon as next week. NAPO is knocking on every door to ensure these provisions are included.

Recruit and Retain Act

NAPO is making a cosponsor push for the Recruit and Retain Act (H.R. 3325), sponsored by Congressman Wesley Hunt (R-TX). The Senate version of this legislation (S. 546) passed the Senate by voice vote on July 26. This bill is a top priority for the NAPO, and we need to build support for the bill – particularly Republican support – in the House for it to gain traction with leadership and move forward.

Through important changes to the COPS Program, the Recruit and Retain Act will help remove financial obstacles to the law enforcement application process and aid in the recruitment of community police officers through the creation of a Pipeline Partnership Program. Specifically, it would:

- It will allow law enforcement agencies experiencing recruitment difficulties to use COPS Hiring funds to help reduce or pay for application-related fees, such as background checks, psychological evaluations, and testing, which have proved to be obstacles for candidates.
- It will allow for COPS Hiring funds to be used to help law enforcement agencies establish a Pipeline Partnership with primary schools, secondary schools, community colleges, and universities to cultivate relationships that are designed to increase recruitment and interest in the profession.

Our talking point with fiscally conservative Republicans is that this bill does not authorize additional funding for the COPS Program or create a new grant program; it simply expands the authorized uses of COPS funding. NAPO believes this bill can play a vital role in helping states and localities hire and retain community police officers to ensure they can protect and serve America's communities efficiently and effectively.

HELPER Act

NAPO is working to move the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act (S.1514), sponsored by Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), through the Senate Banking Committee and has been reaching out to Committee members to urge them to cosponsor this important bill. Strong bipartisan support will be key to moving the bill and we are focusing on Republican Committee members in particular to get on board.

The HELPER Act establishes a first-time homebuyer program through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to provide mortgage assistance to law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders. Specifically, qualified individuals would be eligible for a mortgage on a primary family residence with no down payment and no monthly mortgage insurance premium.

Like many public servants, law enforcement officers serve and protect our nation and our communities for modest wages, and they often face financial obstacles when buying a home in today's competitive housing market. Especially with the current high interest rates, many officers and their families have found it difficult to afford to purchase homes, making it harder for them to stay and live in the communities they serve. The Program created by this bill would help the men and women who have chosen to serve their communities buy homes which might otherwise not been possible.

Register Now for NAPO's 35th Annual Police, Fire, EMS and Municipal Employee Pension & Benefits Seminar

Register today and join us January 28 – 30, 2024 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas for [NAPO's 35th Annual Police, Fire, EMS & Municipal Employee Pension & Benefits Seminar](#). Our goal for the Pension & Benefits Seminar is to educate pension and union representatives along with their providers on the latest issues surrounding the pension and benefits industry. Working in close collaboration with our distinguished advisory board, we have put together a program relevant that will focus on the challenges and causes for concern in today's pension and benefits environment.

Greatly increased costs of living appear permanent, and the threats of stagflation and a general recession are rearing their heads. Politically, both parties are already focused on and positioning themselves regarding the upcoming general election. Expanded use of artificial intelligence, the retreat from socially conscious investing, the mounting national debt and its impact on the U.S. credit rating, expanded liability for fiduciaries, and expansion of IRS taxation and reporting powers are just some of the issues being debated. Meanwhile, benefits themselves are being increasingly viewed as a key component of recruitment and retention. We will examine these areas and more as we evaluate the effect of these trends on public employment benefits and security, and the overall economic situation for the near- and mid-term.

Take an active role in improving the future of your fund by registering today. **You will find information regarding registration, hotel reservations and the full agenda on NAPO's website: www.NAPO.org/PB24.** Early bird registration ends TODAY.

PLEASE NOTE: As you are planning your travel to Las Vegas for our Pension and Benefits Seminar, NAPO's Executive Board Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28 at 10:30am.

If you have any questions or need additional information about the Seminar, contact NAPO's Director of Events, Elizabeth Loranger, at 800-322-6276 or eloranger@napo.org.

Please monitor NAPO's website, www.napo.org, and Facebook page: [National Association of Police Organizations](#), and follow us on X at [NAPOpolice](#) for breaking news and updates.