



# The Washington Report

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

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April 26, 2016

## **NAPO Victory! House Judiciary Committee Approves BVP Reauthorization**

In a big victory for NAPO, the House Judiciary Committee approved by voice vote the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program (S. 125). The Senate passed S. 125 during National Police Week 2015 and we are hoping to have it passed by the House and signed into law by Police Week this year.

The Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program has issued more than one million lifesaving vests to 13,000 state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the country since it was established in 1999. However, while many officers are protected by bullet-resistant armor, an alarming number of officers, many in small departments across the nation, are not afforded this same protection due to local budget constraints, which is what makes this program so vital.

S. 125 will not only reauthorize the BVP Program through 2020, but it also strengthens the program through important policy changes:

- BVP Program can provide matching grants only for body armor that meets the strict performance standard requirements set by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, ensuring agencies are only purchasing top quality vests.
- Funding is prioritized for uniquely fitted vests for female officers, which will help save lives as unisex vests do not always fit female officers properly. This will make BVP the only purchasing program within the Departments of Justice, Defense and Homeland security that gives female officers the ability to buy vests that fit their bodies.

NAPO strongly believes that this legislation is essential to assist state and local law enforcement efforts to purchase bullet resistant vests for their officers. Law enforcement officers risk their lives each and every day to keep our communities safe. These brave men and women must be protected with the proper equipment.

NAPO thanks the bill's sponsors – Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ) – for all of their efforts to pass this important legislation and for their support of the law enforcement community. We are continuing to work with them to ensure final passage of S. 125 within the next few weeks.

If you have any questions about the BVP Program or this legislation, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

# **NAPO Victory! Fallen Heroes Flag Act Passes Senate**

Last week, NAPO logged another victory into the books with the passage of the Fallen Heroes Flag Act by unanimous consent in the Senate on April 19<sup>th</sup>. This bill, sponsored by Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), would allow members of Congress to honor a deceased public safety officer who died in the line of duty by providing to the family, at their request, a Capitol-flown flag. The flag would be accompanied by a certificate expressing a message of sympathy signed by either the Speaker of the House or Senate Majority Leader and the Senator or Representative providing the flag.

This will give members of Congress a way to recognize these brave individuals for their heroism and extend a gesture of sympathy and gratitude to the immediate family.

The Fallen Heroes Flag Act, sponsored by Rep. Peter King (R-NY), originally passed the House in May 2015, but the bill had to be amended in the Senate to accommodate Senators who wanted to participate in this program. The bill will now head back to the House for a final vote of approval. We expect the House to vote on this bill within the next few weeks.

If you have any questions about the Fallen Heroes Flag Act, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **NAPO Meeting with Rep. Dan Donovan**

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, NAPO met with Rep. Dan Donovan (R-NY), the new Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee. This subcommittee has jurisdiction over terrorism prevention and disaster response, including vital federal homeland security grant programs for state and local law enforcement.

NAPO worked with Rep. Donovan on the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act and his dedication and work on its behalf was essential to the bill's passage. Rep. Donovan's district has almost 7,000 victims and first responders participating in the World Trade Center Health Program; the most of any district in the nation. This gave him a unique understanding of the necessity of the Zadroga Act.

NAPO discussed our legislative and policy priorities with the Congressman and he was very supportive of our issues. NAPO looks forward to working with Rep. Donovan in his new position as Subcommittee Chair as we continue to push for robust federal resources for state and local law enforcement to aid them in protecting our cities and communities from terrorist attacks and in responding to natural disasters.

## **Senate Appropriators Approve DOJ Spending Levels**

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a fiscal 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (C-J-S) spending bill on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Due to a stalemate in the House over the level at which overall fiscal 2017 spending should be set, the Senate has taken the lead on the appropriations process – a process which traditionally starts in the House. House appropriators are unable to determine funding levels for federal departments, agencies and programs due to this deadlock over whether to honor the budget levels agreed to and passed last year under out-going Speaker John Boehner (R-OH), which a group of fiscal conservatives view as unacceptably high.

For NAPO's priority grant programs, the Committee approved funding at similar levels to those in fiscal 2016. The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program is authorized at \$384 million, which is \$92 million less than 2016. That \$92 million deficit could be attributed to the fact that in last year's budget, Byrne JAG received an extra \$100 million to reimburse Cleveland, Ohio and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the costs of providing security at the Republican and Democrat presidential nominating conventions.

The COPS Hiring Program is appropriated at \$187 million, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program at \$22.5 million, and the Mentally Ill Offender and Crime Reduction Act at \$11 million, all of which are similar funding levels to what these programs received in fiscal 2016.

The spending bill did include a provision in the section appropriating funding to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program that encourages the Program to have transparency and greater efficiency in the claims review process to "reduce the burden on injured officers or surviving families". It also calls for the PSOB office to report to the Committee 90 days after the enactment of the appropriations bill regarding the steps it will take to increase transparency and efficiency.

As part of the PSOB stakeholder advisory committee, NAPO has urged the PSOB leadership to increase transparency and efficiency in determining claims and we have shared our concerns about the program with members of Congress. NAPO is pleased that members of the Appropriations Committee are taking our concerns to heart. While this language is non-binding, should it pass in to law, it will put the PSOB Program on notice that Congress is watching and is not content with how the program is currently being run.

NAPO will continue to work with House and Senate appropriators to ensure our priority programs are supported and get adequately funded. We will keep our members up to date as Congress moves through the appropriations process. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **NAPO Participates in White House Open Police Data Meeting**

NAPO participated in a meeting hosted by the Office of the Vice President and the White House Office of Violence Against Women on open police data and ensuring the safety and security of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The purpose of the meeting was to explore and discuss open police data initiatives and the potential safety and privacy impact of those initiatives to victim privacy and safety. The meeting brought together law enforcement organizations, domestic violence and sexual assault victims advocates, and state and local technology experts to explore how data can be shared in a way that minimizes re-identification of victims.

The White House Police Data Initiative emerged from a recommendation of the Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing in May 2015, with 52 police departments across the country committing to use data to increase transparency and accountability. The idea behind the initiative is by opening up police data to the public, it will improve understanding of policing, enhance community trust in the police and dispel myths and highlight the realities of community policing.

NAPO does not object to open police data, but in putting that information out to the public, we share the concern that the data must be non-identifiable not only for victims of crime, but also for officers. Once the data is out for public consumption, there is no going back and agencies must be certain that they are not exposing anyone to increased risk to their safety and wellbeing.

# NAPO's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual TOP COPS Awards<sup>®</sup>

NAPO's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual TOP COPS Awards<sup>®</sup>, a salute to America's Finest for their contributions to the American people, will be held on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, at the JW Marriot Hotel at 6:30pm.

TOP COPS<sup>®</sup> is a highly popular event and is expected to sell out quickly, so please be sure to purchase your tickets today. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Click [here](#) to purchase your tickets.

May 12, 2016

## 2016 Lobby Day: Legislative Update & NAPO's Annual Legislative Recognition Luncheon

Please join NAPO on May 12th 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 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, and to receive handouts to use during Hill visits. While on Capitol Hill, be sure to stop by NAPO's Legislative Luncheon in the Cannon Caucus Room, where several Congressmen and Senators will be recognized for their continued support of Law Enforcement.

### Schedule of Events

NAPO Legislative Update Breakfast	JW Marriott Hotel	9:00am – 10:30am
Capitol Hill Visits	Capitol Hill	10:30am – 12:00pm
NAPO Legislative Recognition Luncheon	Dirksen Senate Office Building Room G11	12:00pm – 1:30pm
Capitol Hill Visits	Capitol Hill	1:30pm – 5:00pm

*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](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org), by May 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

The registration fee of \$150.00 per person includes the Legislative Update Breakfast, Handouts, and the Legislative Recognition Lunch. Please contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, at (800) 322-6278 or [eloranger@napo.org](mailto:eloranger@napo.org) if you have any questions regarding the seminar or hotel arrangements.

**The last day to register is May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Register online at [www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org) or complete the [registration form](#) and return it to NAPO at [eloranger@napo.org](mailto:eloranger@napo.org) or Fax it to (703) 684-0515.**

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