



The Washington Report

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

February 23, 2015

NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

Capitol Hill Meetings - Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act

On February 20, 2015, NAPO joined fellow stakeholders in meetings with **Congressmen Tom Reed (R-NY)** and **Joseph Crowley (D-NY)** to discuss the *Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act*. This legislation clarifies that both federal and state death benefits for the survivors of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty should be treated the same and not be subjected to federal income tax. Survivor benefits for federal law enforcement officers are currently not subject to federal income tax, but there is some ambiguity about the treatment of these benefits for similar state-based programs.

On February 11, 2015, the Senate Finance Committee passed the *Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act* by voice vote. The House companion bill has been assigned to the House Committee on Ways and Means. Congressmen Reed and Crowley are members of the Ways and Means Committee. Their staffers were receptive to our proposal.

NAPO will continue to work with fellow stakeholders to garner support for this important legislation. If you have any questions about our efforts, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

NAPO Supports the Social Security Fairness Act

Last week, NAPO pledged our support for the Social Security Fairness Act, sponsored by **Congressmen Rodney Davis (R-IL)** and **Adam Schiff (D-CA)**. The Social Security Fairness Act would eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), two titles of the Social Security Act that unfairly reduce or eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of Americans who have devoted much of their careers to public service.

The WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefits of an individual who also receives a public pension from a job not covered by Social Security. The WEP also affects people who move from a job in which they earn Social Security to a job in which they do not.

The GPO affects the spousal benefits of people who work as federal, state, or local government employees—including educators, police officers, and firefighters—if the job is not covered by Social Security. GPO reduces by two-thirds the benefits received by surviving spouses who also collect a government pension. Nine out of ten public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years.

The WEP substantially reduces benefits workers included and counted on when planning their retirement and it substantially penalizes lower paid public employees. These provisions also discourage qualified, talented individuals from entering into public service professions. The WEP and GPO provisions do not eliminate a windfall for workers; they penalize public service employees by taking away benefits they earned throughout their careers.

GPO and WEP take hard-earned Social Security dollars out of the hands of retirees or their spouses, money that would otherwise be spent on essential goods and services to bolster the local economy. Moreover, by significantly scaling back and reducing Social Security benefits for law enforcement officers and their survivors, as GPO and WEP do, officers and their families are provided much less protection against financial difficulties.

NAPO will continue to expend all available efforts to repeal the WEP and GPO provisions. Our letter of support is attached to this report for your convenience and review. If you have any questions about our efforts, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

Source:

"U.S. Congressman Rodney Davis Proudly Representing the 13th District of Illinois." *Reps. Davis, Schiff Introduce Bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act*. N.p., 13 Feb. 2015. Web. 20 Feb. 2015.
<<http://www.rodneydavis.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398580>>.

Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has released the FY 2015 Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) solicitation. Applications are due April 14, 2015. The current solicitation has priority considerations for law enforcement. Additional information is available at the following site: <https://www.bja.gov/Funding/15JMHCPsol.pdf>.

The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) created the JMHCP to help states and counties design and implement collaborative efforts between criminal justice and mental health systems. The JMHCA reauthorizes the successful MIOTCRA and extends the JMHCP for five years. The JMHCP can help law enforcement agencies across the United States in their responsibilities in assisting citizens with mental health issues.

NAPO expended much effort to garner support for the JMHCA during the last Congress, and was successful in building a strong bipartisan list of cosponsors in both chambers. NAPO looks forward to continuing to work with fellow stakeholders during this Congress to reintroduce and pass this important legislation.

If you have any questions about the JMHCP, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@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.



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February 19, 2015

The Honorable Rodney Davis
United States House of Representatives
2159 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Davis:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to express our full support for the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 973).

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.

NAPO strongly supports the Social Security Fairness Act, which would strike the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) formulas currently used to calculate Social Security benefits. Both GPO and WEP penalize workers with split careers who contributed a great deal to Social Security, but retire under "non-covered" pensions.

GPO and WEP take hard-earned Social Security dollars out of the hands of retirees or their spouses, money that would otherwise be spent on essential goods and services to bolster the local economy. Moreover, by significantly scaling back and reducing Social Security benefits for law enforcement officers and their survivors, as GPO and WEP do, officers and their families are provided much less protection against financial difficulties.

NAPO will continue to support efforts to totally repeal GPO and WEP from Title II of the Social Security Act.

If we can provide any additional assistance to advance this legislation, please feel free to contact me at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson
Executive Director