



The Washington Report

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

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NAPO Victory! Congress Passes Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Act

In a victory for NAPO and officers across the country, Congress passed the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (H.R. 2228) on December 22, sending it to President Trump to be signed into law.

The legislation would help law enforcement agencies establish or enhance mental health care services for their officers by making grants available to initiate peer mentoring pilot programs, developing resources for mental health providers based on the specific mental health challenges faced by law enforcement, and supporting law enforcement officers by studying the effectiveness of crisis hotlines and annual mental health checks.

According to the National Study of Police Suicides, officers are 2.5 times more likely to die from suicides than from homicides. State and local law enforcement officers are our nation's first responders. They respond to our country's greatest tragedies as well as violent crimes that unfortunately occur more frequently in our communities. They have seen and experienced horrors that they cannot forget, yet they still put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities. It is time that we as a nation recognize the stress and strain of the job and give officers the resources they need to address their emotional and mental wellbeing.

The enactment of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act was a top priority for NAPO. We offer our sincere appreciation to Senators Joe Donnelly (D-IN) and Don Young (R-IN) and Congresswoman Susan Brooks (R-IN) for their leadership on this issue and their commitment to ensuring officers have access to the best mental health services available. We also thank House and Senate leadership, including Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), for their support of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act and dedication to seeing it become law.

If you have any questions about this Act, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

Attorney General Reverses Obama Administration Policy on Enforcement of Federal Marijuana Laws

On January 4, Attorney General Sessions issued a [memorandum](#) reversing the "Cole Memo", 2013 guidance from then-Deputy Attorney General James Cole that directed federal prosecutors to back off enforcement of federal marijuana laws in states that had legalized the drug and had a regulatory system in place.

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In the memorandum, the Attorney General directs all U.S. Attorneys to enforce the laws enacted by Congress, which generally prohibit the cultivation, distribution, and possession of marijuana. This is intended to return local control to federal prosecutors who know where and how to deploy federal resources to most effectively reduce violent crime, fight the dissemination of drugs and dismantle criminal gangs. It is not intended to direct federal agents to go after individual pot users, but to help stop the mass distribution of this gateway drug and help tackle the massive drug crisis this county is experiencing.

NAPO Victory! Congress Passes INTERDICT Act

In another year-end victory for NAPO, Congress passed the International Narcotics Trafficking Emergency Response by Detecting Incoming Contraband with Technology (INTERDICT) Act (S. 708 / H.R. 2142) on December 21, 2017. The bill was sponsored by Senator Edward Markey (D-MA) and Congresswoman Nicki Tsongas (D-MA) and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA).

Fentanyl, particularly illicitly manufactured fentanyl, and other synthetic drugs are having deadly consequences on communities across the country, both big and small. Because illicit fentanyl is so powerful — just a few salt-sized grains can kill an adult — small amounts go a long way for drug traffickers. These relatively small and potent amounts mean fentanyl is difficult and hazardous to detect, making them easy to traffic across the border and a danger to those trying to stop its importation.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is on the front lines of the battle to detect and halt illegal fentanyl and other synthetic drugs being trafficked into the United States. CBP has had success interdicting these drugs with hi-tech chemical screening devices, with the support of scientists in CBP laboratories. However, CBP needs additional resources to continue and expand its ability to stop these dangerous drugs from entering the country. The INTERDICT Act supports the CBP in its efforts by providing for additional chemical screening devices, scientists and other resources to help prevent the illegal importation of these illicit drugs and safeguard CBP field personnel from possible deadly exposure.

NAPO Priorities: 2017 Year-End Review

In addition to the passage of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act and the INTERDICT Act, highlighted above, NAPO had a very successful year in moving our legislative and policy priorities. These wins are highlighted below in our year-end review.

NAPO Priority Legislation Passed by the House or Senate

- **Thin Blue Line Act.** The bill passed the House on May 18, 2017, by a bipartisan vote of 271-143. It would make the targeting of, attempted killing, or killing of a police officer, firefighter, or first responder an aggravating factor in death penalty determinations in federal court. This would be applicable whether they were targeted or murdered on duty, because of the performance of their duty, or because of their status as a public official. The only requirement is that the homicide provide federal jurisdiction.
- **Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act.** The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on September 7, 2017. It would eliminate the expected family contribution (EFC) used to determine financial need in the case of a Pell Grant-eligible student whose parent or guardian died in the line of duty. Additionally, children of public safety officers who died in the line of duty would qualify for the maximum Pell Grant award (\$5,920 for 2017-2018) if he or she was less than 24 years old or enrolled at an institution of higher education at the time of the parent or guardian's death.

- **Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act.** The bill passed the House on May 22, 2017 by voice vote. It would reauthorize key programs under the Adam Walsh Act and improve upon the original Act by strengthening law enforcement's ability to track sex offenders through federal support of state registries and dedicated resources to target offenders who fail to comply with registration requirements.
- **Targeting Child Predators Act.** The bill passed the House by voice vote on May 22, 2017. It would require that in specific and serious cases of child exploitation, ISPs wait 180 days before disclosing to a specific user that their information was requested by law enforcement.
- **Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act.** The bill passed by House by voice vote on May 25, 2017. It would close a loophole created by a ruling in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit that allowed for an admitted child abuser to escape federal punishment because the perpetrator lacked the requisite intent when he took a picture of the assault on his phone.
- **Abolish Human Trafficking Act.** The bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 11, 2017. It would boost support for and protection of victims of human trafficking by increasing law enforcement resources, enhancing victims' services, and increasing penalties in an effort to combat child sex trafficking, child pornography, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. It would give law enforcement additional tools to target criminal street gangs involved in organized human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Additionally, it would provide for more training for federal, state and local law enforcement anti-trafficking task forces to better equip them to identify victims of human trafficking and refer them to much-needed victims' services.

NAPO is looking forward to building off the incredible momentum we gained in 2017 on these priority bills and seeing them signed into law in 2018.

NAPO Priority Legislation Signed into Law

- **Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Improvement Act.** It returns the PSOB Program to a presumptive benefit and restores the "substantial weight" standard that requires PSOB to give substantial weight to the findings of federal, state, and local agencies as to the cause of the public safety officer's death or disability. It ensures that children of fallen or disabled public safety officers will still be eligible for education benefits if an adjudication delay causes them to age out of benefit eligibility before their claim is approved. Further, it increases transparency through weekly and quarterly public reports on the status of claims.
- **Honoring Hometown Heroes Act.** It permits the Governor of a state or territory to lower the American flag to half-staff in the tragic event that a law enforcement officer, firefighter or public safety officer from that jurisdiction dies in the line of duty. It ensures that first responders who make the ultimate sacrifice while protecting their communities will also have the simple, but meaningful honor of having the flag flown at half-staff.
- **American Law Enforcement Heroes Act.** It encourages state and local law enforcement agencies to hire veterans as new law enforcement officers by creating a preference within the COPS Hiring Program for those agencies and departments who hire veterans.
- **PROTECT Our Children Act.** It reauthorizes the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, which is a national network of 61 coordinated task forces representing over 3,500 federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies that are continually engaged in proactive and reactive investigations and prosecutions of persons involved in child abuse and exploitation involving the internet.

- **Rapid DNA Act.** It ensures that law enforcement agencies that use rapid DNA technology can upload profiles generated by those instruments into the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) in the field, following standards and procedures to be issued by the FBI, rather than having to go through an accredited crime lab.

NAPO Non-Legislative Victories

- **Executive Order on Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement.** President Trump issued an Executive Order on February 9, 2017, entitled "Preventing Violence Against Federal, State, Tribal, and Local Law Enforcement Officers." NAPO has long been advocating for the policies and actions laid out in the Executive Order and in a meeting with the Trump presidential transition team, we included our suggestions for preventing violence against law enforcement in both our oral and written remarks to the team.

The Executive Order reflects NAPO's position in making the case for existing constitutional bases for federal protections of state and local officers, including enacting new federal criminal provisions to address the assault and murder of federally-funded local law enforcement officers, such as those officers whose agencies receive aid from the federal DOJ or DHS. (Please see [NAPO's written remarks](#) submitted to the Trump Presidential Transition Team, specifically under the heading "Increased Penalties for Crimes against Law Enforcement".)

- **Executive Order Repealing Restrictions on State and Local Law Enforcement's Access to Surplus Military Equipment.** On August 28, 2017, President Trump issued an Executive Order, "Restoring State, Tribal, and Local Law Enforcement's Access to Life-Saving Equipment and Resources", which fully repeals President Obama's Executive Order 13688 and any policies and recommendations that were created pursuant to that Executive Order. This is a huge victory for NAPO as we have fought to reinstate state and local law enforcement's unfettered access to this vital equipment since President Obama restricted it in May of 2015.

President Trump's Executive Order restores the full scope of the Department of Defense's 1033 Program and removes any strings related to grants used to purchase this type of equipment from other federal departments and agencies, such as the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. It directs federal agencies and departments to immediately cease implementing the recommendations of the Executive Order and to promptly rescind any rules, regulations, guidelines, or policies implementing them.

- **FCC Creates Dedicated Emergency Alert System for Blue Alerts.** On December 14, 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to create a dedicated Emergency Alert System (EAS) event code for Blue Alerts. NAPO strongly supported the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, which was named after New York City Police Department Officers and NAPO members Ramos and Liu, who were assassinated while sitting in their police cruiser on December 20, 2014. Their killer posted threats to law enforcement on social media before the attack. A fully operational National Blue Alert Network will be a vital tool to help ensure information on credible threats, like that posted by the individual who killed Officers Ramos and Liu, is quickly and widely disseminated so that officers have advance warning, and can apprehend the criminal before he or she can do more harm.

The National Blue Alert Network allows the federal government to support state and local law enforcement as they work to develop and implement Blue Alert emergency systems in their states. It also supports the 27 states that currently have Blue Alert systems to integrate into a coordinated national framework.

NAPO believes that a dedicated EAS event code for Blue Alerts will facilitate and streamline the adoption of new Blue Alert plans in the remaining 23 states that do not yet have them and will help integrate all Blue Alert systems into the National Blue Alert Network. With the number of law enforcement officer assaults, injuries, and deaths increasing sharply in recent years, a functioning National Blue Alert Network, with all states participating, is vital for the protection of our nation's law enforcement officers.

The FCC's [Report and Order](#) provides a 12-month implementation period for Blue Alerts to be delivered over the Emergency Alert System and 18 months for delivery over the Wireless Emergency Alert system.

NAPO's Legislative Scorecard for the 1st Session of the 115th Congress

Find out how your representatives and senators voted on NAPO's priority issues by reviewing NAPO's Mid-Term "Legislative Scorecard" for the 115th Congress, which is available on our [website](#) under Washington Report. The results include all recorded votes that impacted NAPO's members in the House of Representatives and Senate during the 1st Session of the 115th Congress (2017- 2018). The "Legislative Scorecard" includes the following documents:

- Description of the votes studied during this Congress, as well as NAPO's stance on each of the votes;
- Spreadsheets, which detail House & Senate support by member and state.
- A map depicting the level of Congressional support for the law enforcement community across the country;
- A chart reflecting support by political party in the House and the Senate; and
- A table detailing the average level of support in the House and Senate by state.

If you have any questions about the "Legislative Scorecard" or any of the legislation that NAPO is currently working, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.



25th Annual TOP COP AWARDS® Dinner May 14, 2018 Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington D.C.

January 12th is the deadline for TOP COPS nominations

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. Attached, please find the nomination form which must be postmarked or faxed to (703) 684-0515 by **January 12, 2018**. 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.

2018 will mark the twenty-fifth year that NAPO has hosted the TOP COPS Awards®. The TOP COP Awards® Dinner will take place Monday, May 14 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!

Handwritten signature of Michael McHale in black ink.

Michael McHale
President, NAPO

Handwritten signature of Bill Johnson in black ink.

Bill Johnson
Executive Director, NAPO

It's Not Too Late! Join NAPO for our 30th Annual Pension & Benefits Seminar

Caesars Palace Hotel & Casino – Las Vegas, NV – January 28-30, 2018

We invite you to join the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) for our 30th Annual Police, Fire, EMS & Municipal Employee Pension & Benefits Seminar to be held at Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, January 28-30, 2018. Participate in discussions on the pressing topics that are affecting your pension fund and benefits.

Topics will include: Pension Threats & Reforms, The U.S. Supreme Court Case that may Gut Unions Across the Country, Plan Fund & Design, The Pension Crisis that started in Kentucky and Why it May Be Coming to Your State Soon, Tax Reform and the Loss of State and Local Tax Deductions, The Death of the 401(k) Plan, Medicare Options and Security Breaches just to name a few!

For the most up to date agenda check NAPO's website at www.napo.org

Take an active role in improving your fund by registering for this informative seminar. Registration and Hotel information is attached. Registration Information is also found on the NAPO's website [event page](#).

If you have any questions or need additional information please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events at eloranger@napo.org or (703) 549-0775. We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas!

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.