



The Washington Report

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

March 9, 2015

NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

NAPO in the News: Task Force on 21st Century Policing

On December 18, 2014, President Obama signed an Executive Order to create the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. The Task Force released a report on March 2, 2015, with recommendations to help communities and law enforcement agencies across the country strengthen trust and collaboration, while continuing to reduce crime.

The Task Force made 63 recommendations after holding seven public hearings across the country. It is important to note that NAPO is the only police rank and file group in the nation to have a seat on the Commission itself. Our Treasurer, Sean Smoot, of the Illinois PB&PA, was appointed by the President to the Commission. Additionally, NAPO's President, Mick McHale, and Executive Director, Bill Johnson, testified at numerous Task Force listening sessions.

NAPO has concerns with many of the Task Force's recommendations. For example, the Task Force recommended external independent criminal investigations and review by outside prosecutors when police use force that results in death or anyone dies in police custody, instead of the internal investigations that are the policy of some law enforcement agencies. Johnson responded to this recommendation in articles published by [ABC News](#) and [Associations Now](#) by noting the following concern:

“An outside investigation of a police-involved shooting may make sense in limited circumstances when a police department has few resources. But in the vast majority of cases, it is unnecessary and perhaps even counterproductive...I think it helps to drive a wedge between a local police department and the community it serves — which is exactly contrary to what the intent of this police task force was supposed to be...I think it sends a message that your local police can't be trusted.”

In articles published by the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) and [Havasu News](#), Johnson explained: “Some recommendations make sense, but many are already in place or have been put in motion by President Obama's Department of Justice, including tying federal law enforcement aid to agencies that emphasize diverse hiring.”

In the same articles, Johnson voiced concerns about the lack of rank-and-file involvement in drafting recommendations by noting that he was not:

“Surprised by the report's emphasis on (police) departments needing, in the task force's view, to acknowledge

their history of racism given that the commission included no rank-and-file police officers.... ‘You have academics, law school professors, chiefs of police, community organizers, but you don’t have any cops involved in writing the recommendations... It is kind of hard for me to hear some Yale professor talk about inclusion when they exclude rank-and-file cops.’”

(Please view the full articles by clicking on the publication links above).

The full Task Force report is available at the following link: <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/Interim—TF—Report.pdf>.

NAPO will continue to ensure our members’ voices are heard loud and clear as the Task Force’s recommendations are considered. If you have any questions about this report, please contact Bill Johnson at: bjohnson@napo.org.

Source:

Picker, Nedra. "Obama: 'Now S the Moment for Police to Make Changes'" *ABC News*. ABC News, 2 Mar. 2015. Web. 2 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/Obama-focus-civil-rights-struggles-past-present-29318433>>.

NAPO in the News: Ensuring Elderly and Homebound Individuals Stay Safe

The Waterville Police Department in Maine is looking for older adults and others who may be homebound because of physical or medical issues to become part of a program that checks on them daily by phone. The “Are you OK?” program uses an automated phone system to call people in their homes as many times a day as they wish, at the times they prefer, and all they need to do is pick up the phone when it rings and hang it up, which lets police know they are OK.

NAPO’s Executive Director, Bill Johnson, provided comments on this program to the [Kennebec Journal & Morning Sentinel](#):

“Such programs are becoming more common as law enforcement agencies reach out to the public to develop relationships, not only with elderly people and those who may have medical issues, but also to build trust with people in communities in general. Deepening the bond of trust between police officers and citizens can help both sides of the relationship...because when people see officers as human beings, they are more willing to turn to them when they have difficulties related to domestic violence, depression and other issues. Police are there to protect and serve and not just to make arrests and deal with violent situations.”

Johnson also explained that programs that check on people in their homes are important: “I think it’s a great idea and I think it helps to build and solidify ties and bridges with the community and police also.”

The full article is available at the following link: <https://www.centralmaine.com/2015/03/06/waterville-plans-robo-calls-to-keep-elderly-shutins-safe/>.

If you have any questions about NAPO’s position on this program, please contact Bill Johnson at: bjohnson@napo.org.

NAPO Supports the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015

Last week, **Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD)** and **Lindsey Graham (R-SC)** and **Congressmen Dave Reichert (R-WA)** and **Bill Pascrell (D-NJ)** introduced legislation that will create a nationwide alert system to apprehend violent criminals who have injured or killed police officers or who have made an imminent or credible threat to cause serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer. Blue Alerts also could be issued when a suspect is wanted in connection with a law enforcement officer who has gone missing in connection with his or her official duties. Based on the success of the Amber Alerts for missing children, a nationwide Blue Alert system would be used to disseminate critical information to law enforcement agencies, the public, and the media.

Each day, more than 900,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe. Tragically, sometimes the unthinkable happens and a police officer is seriously injured, killed, or goes missing in the line of duty. In such instances, the rapid dissemination of important critical, time-sensitive information about suspected criminals is essential to keeping our communities safe.

The Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015 is named in honor of two New York City Police Officers, and NAPO members, who were assassinated while sitting in their police patrol car in December 2014.

NAPO has worked closely with Senator Cardin, Senator Grassley, Congressman Reichert, and Congressman Pascrell to reintroduce this important legislation. (Similar legislation has been introduced in previous Congresses, passing the House and the Senate Judiciary Committee with strong bipartisan support). Senator Cardin, Congressman Reichert, and Congressman Pascrell highlighted NAPO as a supporter of the bill in their press releases. Additionally, Senator Cardin noted that NAPO is a strong supporter of the bill in his floor statement to introduce the legislation.

NAPO's letters of support are attached to this report for your convenience and review. We look forward to working with fellow stakeholders to pass this important legislation during the 114th Congress.

If you have any questions about this legislation, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

Source:

"Ben Cardin - Senator for Maryland." *Senator Cardin*. N.p., 4 Mar. 2015. Web. 4 Mar. 2015.

<<http://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/cardin-graham-introduce-bill-to-create-a-national-blue-alert-system-to-protect-the-public-and-help-apprehend-criminals-who-harm-or-threaten-law-enforcement-officers>>.

Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act

On February 26, 2015, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee without opposition. The legislation will be reviewed by the Senate this week.

This legislation 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.

NAPO has worked closely with the bill's sponsor, **Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)**, and fellow stakeholders to garner support for this legislation. Most recently, NAPO participated in a conference call on the bill with Senator Cornyn's staff and other stakeholders on March 6, 2015.

We are committed to continuing to work with Senator Cornyn and his staff to ensure this legislation is passed. We will keep our members updated on the status of this bill. If you have any questions about the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

NAPO Attends 2015 Annual Meeting of the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security

NAPO attended the annual meeting of the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security (CPRS) on March 2, 2015. **Congressman Kevin Brady (R-TX)** opened the meeting by providing background on the Equal Treatment for Public Servants Act, which NAPO supports. This legislation would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), and correct Social Security benefits for public servants. The main tenets of the legislation are as follows:

- Permanently repeals the current WEP and replaces it with a new and fair formula that treats public servants like the rest of American workers
- Guarantees public servants receive the benefits they earned while they paid into Social Security
- Reduces the WEP by up to 1/3 for current retirees, and up to 1/2 for future retirees – increasing lifetime Social Security benefits by between \$20,000 and \$32,400 (as estimated by the Social Security actuary)
- Does not impact the Social Security trust fund

The loss of income caused by the WEP formula is a financial strain on law enforcement officers and their families, an additional strain that those who spent their careers on the front lines protecting our nation's communities do not need. This bill will guarantee public servants receive the benefits they earned while they paid into Social Security.

NAPO's Executive Director Bill Johnson serves as the elected National Law Enforcement representative to the CPRS Board of Directors and NAPO looks forward to working with Congressman Brady to pass this bill during the 114th Congress.

Additionally, the group discussed the consequences of mandatory Social Security coverage. NAPO supports a long-term solution to Social Security, so long as such a solution does not mandate that all or some state and local government employees, including newly hired ones and their employing agencies, be required to pay Social Security taxes. Adding presently non-covered public safety workers will not fix the basic problems of Social Security. While it will bring new workers into the Social Security system, the system will also have to assume a liability for these new workers, which will eventually have to be paid.

Moreover, even if Social Security taxes were limited to new hires, the likely consequences of mandatory Social Security taxes, including reduced benefits, lower salaries, or frozen cost-of-living increases, would make law enforcement and fire safety work less financially desirable.

NAPO plans to continue to work with members of CPRS to educate members of Congress and their staff on the negative consequences of mandatory Social Security coverage.

If you have any questions about the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act or efforts to fight mandatory Social Security coverage, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

Source:

United States. Cong. House. Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act. 113th Cong., 2nd sess. H. Doc. Washington, D.C.: Congressman Kevin Brady, 2014. Print.

NAPO Supports the Health Savings Act of 2015

Last week, NAPO pledged our support for the Health Savings Act of 2015, sponsored by **Congressman Michael Burgess (R-TX)**. (NAPO's letter of support is attached to this bill for your convenience and review).

The bill would expand the use of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), which allow Americans to put aside money for themselves and their children to help mitigate the rising cost of deductibles and out-of-pocket healthcare expenses. Current law only allows HSAs to be purchased for certain health insurance plans, and contributions are restricted to levels that are often substantially lower than deductibles. The Health Savings Act of 2015 would ensure HSAs may be used more broadly, thereby increasing patient choice in how their healthcare dollars are spent.

In addition to making HSAs more accessible, the bill would allow parents to set up an HSA for their child, while allowing the contributor to claim an after-tax deduction. Further, the bill would raise the contribution limit to match the maximum out-of-pocket limit. Finally, the Health Savings Act would provide bankruptcy protections to HSAs in the same way retirement accounts are currently protected.

NAPO has discussed this bill at length with senior staffers for Congressman Burgess. We will continue to stay engaged with his staff as we work to garner support for this bill.

NAPO will keep our members updated on the status of this legislation. If you have any questions about this bill, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

House Passes Bill to Fully Fund Homeland Security

The House passed a bill March 3, 2015 to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security for the rest of the fiscal year. The measure, which has also cleared the Senate, will not target Obama's executive actions on immigration. The bill passed 257-167, with some Republicans joining Democrats in the vote.

If you have any questions about this vote, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

Source:

Sullivan, Sean. "House Passes Bill to Fully Fund Homeland Security." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 03 Mar. 2015. Web. 03 Mar. 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2015/03/03/house-to-vote-on-new-bill-to-fully-fund-homeland-security/?wpisrc=al_alert>.

Senator Mikulski Will Not Seek Reelection

On March 2, 2015, **Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)** announced that she would not seek reelection next year. Senator Mikulski was first elected to the House in 1976, and ten years later, she was elected to the Senate.

Senator Mikulski is the Vice Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Ranking Member on the Committee's Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies. NAPO will continue to stay engaged with Senator Mikulski and her staff as the Appropriations process moves forward to ensure our top priority grant programs receive robust funding.

If you have any questions about NAPO's interactions with Senator Mikulski's office, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

Source:

Naylor, Brian. "Sen. Mikulski, Groundbreaker For Female Legislators, Won't Seek Re-Election." NPR. NPR, 02 Mar. 2015. Web. 02 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.npr.org/2015/03/02/390245024/sen-mikulski-ground-breaker-for-women-legislators-wont-see-reelection>>.



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Police Officers Labor Council
of Michigan

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON
Executive Director and
General Counsel

March 6, 2015

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cardin:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to express our full support of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015 (S. 665).

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.

We are grateful that you have introduced this legislation, which will create a nationwide alert system to apprehend violent criminals who have injured or killed a police officer or who have made an imminent or credible threat to cause serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer.

Individuals who attack law enforcement officers are the most dangerous criminals, and every effort must be made to apprehend these individuals as quickly as possible. A Blue Alert system will allow information on these suspects to be disseminated to law enforcement, the public, and the media, to ensure that these dangerous criminals are apprehended before they can do more harm.

This critical legislation is named after New York City Police Department Detectives and members of NAPO, Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu. These heroes were assassinated while serving their community. Their killer posted threats to law enforcement on social media before the attack. Implementing a Blue Alert system will help to ensure that information on credible threats, like those posted by the individual who killed Detectives Ramos and Liu, is widely disseminated so that officers have advanced warning, and can expeditiously apprehend these violent criminals.

NAPO strongly believes this legislation is necessary for the law enforcement community and the public they serve and protect. We stand ready to support any efforts necessary to pass this important legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director



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Police Officers Labor Council
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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON
Executive Director and
General Counsel

March 6, 2015

The Honorable Dave Reichert
United States House of Representatives
1127 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Reichert:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to express our full support of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015 (H.R. 1269).

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.

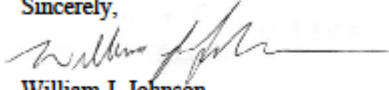
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NAPO strongly believes this legislation is necessary for the law enforcement community and the public they serve and protect. We stand ready to support any efforts necessary to pass this important legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

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William J. Johnson
Executive Director

Date

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

We write to thank you for your strong and consistent support of the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program, and for the funding in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015. We write to ask that you maintain funding for the program in the fiscal year 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill.

As thoughtful stewards of taxpayer money, we must continually assess where federal support is necessary and appropriate. It is clear to us that the strong foundation of federal, state, and local partnerships built from the Byrne JAG program remains as vital as ever.

One of the highest responsibilities of government is to protect its citizens and ensure public safety. We are concerned that regional, national and international gangs and drug trafficking organizations are increasingly driving the crime on our streets, embedding criminal activity deeper into our rural communities, and driving a dangerous new wave of heroin addiction across the country. Byrne JAG-funded programs facilitate cross-governmental intelligence and information sharing on terror and criminal threats, drug and human trafficking organizations and sexual predators. This collaboration is essential to address today's criminal networks that cross city, state and even international boundaries.

Nationwide, the overall crime rate is at its lowest level since the 1960s due in part to advances in policing, information technology, offender management, and cross-jurisdictional coordination support by the Byrne JAG program. Crime in some communities, however, is on the rise again, reminding us that we must never become complacent when it comes to the safety of our citizens. Federal support for Byrne JAG and state and local law enforcement is our first line of defense against criminals and the Byrne JAG program is vital in combating crimes of all types.

Through Byrne JAG, the Department of Justice (DOJ) plays a crucial role in spurring innovation and testing cost-effective, evidence-based approaches to fighting crime. With over 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the U.S., cross-jurisdictional learning and coordination cannot happen effectively without federal support.

Furthermore, crime prevention and control can be truly successful only when the criminal justice system is in balance, with all of the parts functioning effectively. Byrne JAG's flexibility allows state and local governments to target their most pressing needs in law enforcement, prevention, pretrial services and treatment, courts, corrections, crime victims' services, prosecution and defense, and post-incarceration reentry services. Byrne JAG also leverages the massive investment that already occurs regularly in these programs at the state and local level.

We know of your steadfast commitment to the Byrne JAG program in years past, and we ask for your continued support in the fiscal year 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON
Executive Director and
General Counsel

March 3, 2015

Honorable Michael Burgess
United States House of Representatives
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Burgess:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), representing 241,000 rank-and-file officers from across the United States, I am writing to you to express full support for the Health Savings Act of 2015 (H.R. 1196).

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.

We are grateful that you have introduced this bill, which will expand the use of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), and allow Americans to put aside money for themselves and their children to help mitigate the rising cost of deductibles and out-of-pocket healthcare expenses.

Public safety officers have been impacted by the current law, which only allows HSAs to be purchased for certain health insurance plans, and contributions are restricted to levels that are often substantially lower than deductibles. This bill will help to ensure that HSAs may be used more broadly, thereby increasing patient choice in how their healthcare dollars are spent.

NAPO believes this bill is important to the law enforcement community, and stands ready to support any efforts necessary to pass this legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson
Executive Director