



# The Washington Report

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

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June 30, 2014

## NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

### **NAPO Victory!**

## **Senate Passes Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act**

On June 26, 2014, the Senate passed the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) Reauthorization Act of 2013 (S.1799), which was introduced in December 2013 by U.S. **Senators Chris Coons (D-DE)** and **Roy Blunt (R-MO)**, co-chairs of the Senate Law Enforcement Caucus, and **Senators Jeff Sessions (R-AL)** and **Mazie Hirono (D-HI)**, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. This bill reauthorizes the VOCAA, which provides funding for Children's Advocacy Centers that serve child victims of violent crimes and help law enforcement hold perpetrators accountable.

The legislation adopted last Thursday night reflects two modifications from the bill approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The first change is a reduction in authorized funding level from \$22.5 million per year to \$20 million per year. This amount matches the most recent authorization level and is \$1 million above the current fiscal year's appropriation. The second modification is new language that will ensure that funds expended via the Crime Victim's Fund, established under the Victims of Crime Act, are spent only for victim-assistance purposes. The reauthorization bill will also strengthen Victims of Child Abuse Act programs through enhanced accountability provisions, non-profit requirements, and limitations on conference expenditures.

NAPO pledged our support for the VOCAA Reauthorization Act in December 2013, and has expended all available efforts to ensure the bill was passed by the Senate. Senator Coons recognized NAPO as a supporter of the bill in his press release following the passage of the bill. We look forward to continuing to work with Senator Coons and his staff in the future.

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

#### **Source:**

"U.S. Senator Chris Coons of Delaware." *US Senator Christopher Coons*. N.p., 27 June 2014. Web. 29 June 2014. <<http://www.coons.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/release/senate-passes-senator-coons-bill-to-save-vital-advocacy-centers-for-victims-of-child-abuse>>.

# Legislative Scorecard Results

NAPO has completed a “Legislative Scorecard” for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, which can be viewed at the following site: [http://www.napo.org/files/8914/0407/9883/Full\\_Compilation - Vote Project - Work-In-Progress UPDATE - June 27 2014.pdf](http://www.napo.org/files/8914/0407/9883/Full_Compilation_-_Vote_Project_-_Work-In-Progress_UPDATE_-_June_27_2014.pdf). The results include all votes that impacted NAPO’s members in the House of Representatives and Senate through June 2014. For your convenience and review, the “Legislative Scorecard” includes the following documents:

- A description of the votes studied during this Congress, as well as NAPO’s stance on each of the votes;
- 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;
- A data snapshot, which summarizes the report results;
- A table, which details the average level of support in the House and Senate by state; and
- Excel spreadsheets, which detail House & Senate support by member, party, and state.

*Please note that NAPO will conduct a final analysis at the conclusion of the 113th Congress, but wanted to provide our members with a status update of how each member of Congress has voted to date.*

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Melissa Nee at: [mnee@napo.org](mailto:mnee@napo.org).

## NAPO Responds to Supreme Court Ruling - Warrants Required for Cell Phone Searches

The Supreme Court has ruled that police generally need a warrant before searching the cell phone or personal electronic device of a person arrested. Writing for a unanimous court on June 25, 2014, Chief Justice John Roberts said searches of digital devices for information are not comparable to searches law enforcement officers often conduct for contraband after making an arrest.

NAPO’s Executive Director has expressed concerns about the impact of this ruling on law enforcement officers to multiple news sources over the past week. Please take a moment to review Johnson’s concerns expressed on behalf of the law enforcement community in the following *NBC News* article: <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/cops-see-reason-concern-landmark-cellphone-ruling-n140771>.

If you have any questions about this ruling, please contact Bill Johnson at: [bjohnson@napo.org](mailto:bjohnson@napo.org).

## NAPO Meeting on Capitol Hill – Congressman Jason Smith

On June 27, 2014, NAPO met with a senior staffer for **Congressman Jason Smith (R-MO)**. (Congressman Smith is a member of the House Judiciary Committee). NAPO used the meeting to outline our top priorities, which include the following bills:

**Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act (JMHCRA):** NAPO explained that the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) created the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCRA) to help states and counties design and implement collaborative efforts between criminal justice and mental health systems. The JMHCRA reauthorizes the successful MIOTCRA and extends the JMHCRA for five years. The JMHCRA can help law

enforcement agencies across the United States in their responsibilities in both assisting and dealing with citizens with mental health issues.

**Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program Reauthorization Act:** NAPO explained the importance of the BVP Grant Program, which provides Federal funds to state and local law enforcement departments to assist state and local law enforcement efforts to purchase bullet resistant vests. NAPO continues to expend all available efforts to garner additional cosponsors for the House and Senate versions of this bill.

**Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Improvement and Reauthorization Act:** NAPO stressed the importance of passing this legislation, which would reauthorize the COPS Program for five years and raise the current hiring cap from \$75,000 to \$125,000. The COPS Office has been extremely successful in implementing and carrying out its designated objectives. Since its creation, the COPS Office has assisted over 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 jurisdictions with over \$14 billion in funding to hire more than 125,000 additional officers. Reauthorizing this program will allow for the continuation of a highly successful program that keeps our communities safe.

**Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act:** MIT Police Officer Collier lost his life while protecting both the campus and the greater Boston community. This legislation will honor Officer Collier by ensuring that campus police officers are added to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program. Campus police officers serve their communities with integrity and valor, and deserve to be included among those public safety personnel whose survivors are eligible to receive benefits under the PSOB Program.

**Social Security Fairness Act:** This bill strikes the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) formulas currently used to calculate Social Security benefits. Both were enacted in the 1980s because Congress was concerned Social Security paid unintended benefits to workers who had spent most of their careers in "non-covered" jobs. However, the formulas go too far and penalize workers with split careers who contributed a great deal to Social Security, but retire under their "non-covered" pensions. 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.

The staffer was very receptive to the above proposals. We look forward to working with Congressman Smith and his staff in the future. If you have any questions about any of the bills summarized above, please contact Melissa Nee at: [mnee@napo.org](mailto:mnee@napo.org)

## **NAPO Meeting on Capitol Hill – Senator Cory Booker**

On June 27, 2014, NAPO met with senior staffers for **Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ)**. NAPO used the meeting to express appreciation for the Senator's support of the law enforcement community. (Currently, Senator Booker is a cosponsor of the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act, and the COPS Improvement and Reauthorization Act). Also, in addition to providing information on the Social Security Fairness Act, NAPO highlighted the following priorities:

**National Blue Alert Act:** This bill would help to establish a nationwide alert system to apprehend violent criminals who have injured or killed police officers. This bill reaffirms NAPO's commitment to ensuring the safety of our law enforcement men and women and the communities they serve to protect every day. The House version of this bill passed in May 2013 by a vote of 406-2, and NAPO continues to expend all available efforts to ensure the Senate passes this important legislation.

**Equity in Law Enforcement Act:** Mirroring the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act, this bill would extend the same Federal benefits to law enforcement officers serving private institutions of higher education that apply

to law enforcement officers serving units of State and local government. This legislation would make these individuals eligible for the same benefits provided to public law enforcement officers, including line-of-duty death benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program and bulletproof vest partnership grants through the Department of Justice. The bill would only apply to officers who are sworn, licensed, or certified to enforce the law within their jurisdiction.

**Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act:** NAPO explained that this bill repurposes and reauthorizes a grant program to create a victim-centered model block grant to help states and local governments develop and implement comprehensive victim-centered programs to train law enforcement to rescue victims, prosecute human traffickers, and restore the lives of victims. It also allows state and local human trafficking task forces to obtain wiretap warrants within their own state courts without federal approval in order to investigate crimes of child pornography, child sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. An amended version of the bill passed the House of Representatives on May 20, 2014, and we are hopeful that it will be reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee in the coming months.

The staffers were very receptive to the above proposals, and we look forward to working with Senator Booker and his staff in the future. If you have any questions about any of the bills summarized above, please contact Melissa Nee at: [mnee@napo.org](mailto:mnee@napo.org)

## **NAPO Supports the Health Savings Act of 2014**

After discussing the Health Savings Act of 2014 (H.R. 4777) with senior staffers for **Congressman Michael Burgess (R-TX)**, NAPO pledged our support for the bill. On June 27, 2014, NAPO sent a formal letter of support for the legislation, which can be viewed at the following site:

[http://www.napo.org/files/7814/0408/1103/NAPO\\_Supports\\_the\\_Health\\_Savings\\_Act.pdf](http://www.napo.org/files/7814/0408/1103/NAPO_Supports_the_Health_Savings_Act.pdf).

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 2014 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 will keep our members updated on the status of this legislation. If you have any questions about this bill, please contact Bill Johnson at: [bjohnson@napo.org](mailto:bjohnson@napo.org).

### **Source:**

"U.S. Congressman Michael C. Burgess, M.D. 26th District of Texas." *US Congressman Michael C Burgess RSS*,30 May 2014. Web. 23 June 2014. <<http://burgess.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=3830>>.

**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 @NAPOpolice for breaking news and updates.**