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## STATEMENT ON POLICY AND POSITION LAW ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES

### **NAPO Supports the Nomination of Senator Sessions for Attorney General**

NAPO endorses the nomination of Senator Sessions to be the next United States Attorney General and stands ready to help his nomination in any way necessary. Senator Sessions has been a leading voice for law enforcement on many issues facing our community and has been strongly supportive of many of our legislative priorities. We look forward to working with him in his new position as the nation's "Top Cop".

### **Repeal of Executive Order 13688**

In May 2014, pursuant to President Obama's Executive Order 13688, the Law Enforcement Equipment Working Group recommended and imposed extensive restrictions on when state and local law enforcement may access certain lifesaving, federal surplus military equipment. Many of the items the Executive Order has restricted are purely defensive gear, such as riot shields, helmets, batons and armored personal transport vehicles. This gear proved essential to local law enforcement in their responses to the terrorist attacks in Orlando, Florida, and San Bernardino, California.

Programs like the 1033 Program and grant programs at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security have been vital resources in allowing state and local law enforcement to acquire items used in search and rescue operations, disaster response, and active shooter situations that they otherwise would not be able to afford. This equipment has not led to the "militarization" of police, but rather has proven to be essential in protecting communities against violent criminals and terrorists with increasing access to sophisticated weaponry, IEDs, body armor and sometimes even armored vehicles.

Officers must be given access to the lifesaving gear they need to defend themselves and the civilians they are sworn to protect. NAPO supports the full revocation of Executive Order 13688.

### **Increased Penalties for Crimes against Law Enforcement**

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, there have been 132 line-of-duty deaths so far this year, of which 61 have been by gunfire, which is a 61 percent increase over the number of gun-related deaths in 2015. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, San Antonio Detective Benjamin Marconi became the 20<sup>th</sup> police officer killed in an ambush this year. This is the highest number of fatal ambush attacks on officers in the past ten years, and these numbers do not take into account the non-fatal ambush attacks on officers.

Increased penalties make important differences in the attitudes of criminal towards public safety officers, and can ensure protection for the community. NAPO supports enacting new federal criminal provisions to address (1) 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; and (2) the assault and murder of state and local officers engaged in the protection of federally recognized civil rights, such as those officers attacked while safeguarding protests. (Also discussed below.) We believe there should be increased penalties on those who harm or target for harm public safety officers by making the murder or attempted murder of a state or local

police officer an aggravating factor in sentencing determinations. NAPO strongly supports legislation that would increase penalties for crimes committed against law enforcement officers.

### **Pro-Law Enforcement Civil Rights Division, DOJ**

We urge the Trump Administration to fill the Assistant Attorney General position for the Civil Rights Division with someone who has a law enforcement background. The candidate must have a close and trusted relationship with police officers and agencies. The current Civil Rights Division has made the demonization and prosecution of law enforcement officers who have used force one of its top priorities, which has alienated the law enforcement community and seriously eroded any trust between law enforcement and the DOJ. The Civil Rights Division must view law enforcement as its ally in protecting the civil rights of our nation's citizens.

NAPO understands that the Civil Rights Division must do its job, including investigation of credible allegations of a wrongful use of force by an officer, but we also expect that under the Trump Administration the Division will ensure that the officer is provided notice and an opportunity to be heard before any decision to prosecute is rendered.

Further, NAPO believes that state and local law enforcement, as part of the performance of their duties, are protectors of citizens' civil rights and any attacks on officers is a violation of civil rights. This would give sufficient federal status to justify a DOJ Civil Rights Division prosecution of those who commit violent crimes against state and local law enforcement officers. We strongly urge the appointment of an Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division who will work collaboratively with law enforcement and ensure federal prosecution, where applicable, of those who commit crimes against officers.

### **Full Funding for State and Local Law Enforcement Grant Programs**

In recent years, budgetary constraints have forced many states and municipalities to make tough choices on public safety with the result being either the reduction in the hiring of new law enforcement officers or the laying off of experienced officers. The **Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program** has been a fiscally responsible solution that has helped jurisdictions avoid having to make those difficult choices. The COPS Hiring Program has assisted more than 13,000 jurisdictions with over \$14 billion in funding to hire more than 127,000 community police officers across the United States.

Unfortunately, the COPS Program under the Obama Administration shifted away from the program's original intent and has become a tool to move a distinct political agenda including policies such as anti-bias training, "procedural justice" and "police legitimacy". These policies were pushed at the expense of critical funding for the hiring and retention of officers. That funding should have been focused on officer and community safety measures such as lowering response time for emergency calls and two officer patrol units. NAPO strongly supports fully funding the COPS Hiring Program and maintaining the program's original intent – helping states and localities hire and retain community police officers to ensure they can protect and serve America's communities efficiently and effectively.

NAPO also strongly supports fully funding the **Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program**, a critical resource that helps state and local agencies purchase bullet-resistant body armor for their officers.

### **Return of NAPO's TOP COPS to the White House**

NAPO hopes that President Trump will welcome our nation's TOP COP award winners to the White House as have previous presidents. The TOP COPS Awards pay tribute to law enforcement officers in federal, state, county, tribal and local agencies from across the country for actions above and beyond the call of duty during the preceding year. It would be an honor for these American heroes to be recognized for their actions by President Trump.