



# The Washington Report

**The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations**

*Representing America's Finest*

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November 22, 2016

## **Congress to Punt Final FY 2017 Spending Decisions until March 2017**

Congress returned to work on November 14<sup>th</sup> for one week before taking another week off for Thanksgiving recess. The one thing lawmakers must accomplish before the end of session is pass the fiscal 2017 spending bills by December 9<sup>th</sup> to avoid a government shutdown. At the request of President-elect Trump, Republican Congressional leadership have decided to move a short-term continuing resolution – which funds the government at the current levels – through March 31, 2017, effectively punting the final decisions for fiscal 2017 into Spring. This means that Congress will be deciding on the final fiscal 2017 appropriations at the same time as starting the fiscal 2018 process and moving on President-elect Trump's top legislative priorities. However, it does give President-elect Trump the ability to help shape fiscal 2017 government spending.

Congress is widely expected to adjourn for the year by December 9<sup>th</sup>. While appropriators are putting the final touches on the continuing resolution, there is a limited possibility for other bills to move before the end of session. One bill that Congress is expected to take up during the lame duck session is the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees are close to hammering out a final deal on the legislation and want to see it passed this year.

NAPO has been working closely with leadership of both the Armed Services Committees on the NDAA to ensure the final legislation includes a provision supporting state and local law enforcement's right to full access to surplus military equipment. While the provision will not reverse President Obama's executive order that restricts state and local law enforcement's access to such lifesaving equipment as defensive gear and armored vehicles, it will ameliorate some of its harmful consequences and will lay the groundwork for the Trump Administration to repeal the executive order in its entirety.

NAPO is also working to move the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB) Improvement Act (S. 2944 / H.R. 5743), the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act, and the Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act – all bipartisan bills that are supported by House and Senate leadership – before the end of session. However, the fact that they are bipartisan may not work in our favor as we are currently dealing with members of Congress who are trying to use these important bills as leverage to pass other, more controversial measures. We are working with our bill sponsors and Congressional leadership to get around these obstacles and pass these bills in the last few weeks of Congress.

We will keep our members updated on the status of these bills as we head into the final weeks of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## Nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions for AG

President-elect Trump announced on November 18<sup>th</sup> that he will nominate Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) for United States Attorney General. Senator Sessions served as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama and the Alabama Attorney General before joining the Senate in 1997. He is a respected member of the Judiciary Committee and has worked closely with NAPO on several of our top legislative priorities. We are proud to support his nomination for U.S. Attorney General.

Senator Sessions is a cosponsor of the Thin Blue Line Act and spoke alongside NAPO leadership at a press conference in support of the legislation last year. He is also a cosponsor of the Lifesaving Gear for Police Act, which would rescind President Obama's executive order that restricts state and local law enforcements' access to surplus military equipment. He is a staunch supporter of stronger immigration enforcement and cosponsored the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act.

Further, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he worked with NAPO and the law enforcement community to amend the Electronic Communications Privacy Act Amendments Act during Committee markup to include emergency exceptions to the warrant requirement. He has also been a voice of opposition to expansive sentencing reform and supports maintaining current federal mandatory minimum sentences. Senator Sessions has shown a keen understanding of law enforcement's needs and we look forward to continue working with him in his new position.

Senator Sessions needs to be confirmed by the Senate to be U.S. Attorney General and while there is some strong opposition from Democrats to the nomination, it is unlikely that the Senate will fail to confirm one of their colleagues. NAPO believes that Senator Sessions will be an ally to NAPO on many of our key Department of Justice issues and we have let him know that we are here to assist in any way necessary.

## National Institute of Justice Releases Final "Smart Gun" Baseline Specifications

On November 16th, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) within the Department of Justice (DOJ) released its final baseline specifications for user-authentication (or "smart gun") technology for law enforcement service firearms, [\*Baseline Specifications for Law Enforcement Service Pistols with Security Technology\*](#).

In January of this year, President Obama issued a memorandum to the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security directing them to promote the use of smart gun technology as a way to reduce gun violence. In response, the Departments of Justice (DOJ), Homeland Security (DHS) and Defense (DOD) submitted a joint report to the President in April outlining a strategy to expedite deployment of smart gun technology. The report described the potential benefits of advanced gun safety technology, but noted that additional work was required before this technology is ready for widespread adoption by law enforcement agencies. In particular, the report stressed the importance of integrating this technology into a firearm's design without compromising the reliability, durability, and accuracy that officers expect from their service weapons.

To address these issues, DOJ and DHS recently assembled a working group of experts in firearms technology to identify operational needs and draft baseline specifications to help law enforcement adopt and use smart gun technology. The idea is that these baseline specifications would outline the agencies' operational requirements for any firearms equipped with smart gun technology and could be used to make clear to private manufacturers what agencies expect from this technology.

In August, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson participated in a convening of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies by the NIJ to review and discuss draft baseline specifications. NAPO strongly pushed back on the need for agencies to adopt smart gun technology as there is no data that proves that this technology will help reduce gun violence. Further, the technology is not readily available or fully vetted, and the costs of purchasing such technology are great and would take funding away from other essential programs and initiatives.

Despite concerns from stakeholders, the NIJ pushed forward with the baseline specifications with very little change. However, with the Trump Administration taking office in January 2017, NAPO sees very little chance that the DOJ will use these specifications to force smart gun technology on federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

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



## Your Nominations Make the Difference for TOP COPS®

This year marks the 24<sup>th</sup> year NAPO has produced the TOP COPS Awards®. The awards dinner will take place on Friday, May 12, 2017, again coinciding with Police Week. The TOP COPS Awards Dinner will be at the Omni Shoreham Hotel located in Washington, D.C. Over the next few months we will be asking for your assistance in three major areas in which you, our members, can help to ensure the success of TOP COPS®: nominations, sponsorships, and show attendance. Today, we want to ask for your assistance with the first and most fundamental component, nominations.

TOP COPS® is unique in that it is a peer nominated award. However, one of the greatest struggles we have faced in the past is getting the nomination form out to officers nationwide. We are asking you to assist us in making this happen. **It is our goal this year to see all 50 states represented with a nominee.** While we appreciate and welcome nominations from the executive level, we would really like to see the nomination form circulated among *your* members.

The nomination form is attached and can be downloaded from the NAPO website, <http://www.napo.org/files/5814/5583/4244/NominationForm2017.pdf>. Please feel free to duplicate and post it anywhere you feel it is appropriate. We would especially like to see forms posted in association offices and departments with the hope that your members will feel inclined to nominate the great cases/officers they have come into contact with over the past year. We would also like to ask you to consider including the nomination form in your association publication, on your website, or as a hand out at your next meeting.

If you have other thoughts or ideas as to how to get the word out about this most worthwhile event, please contact Elizabeth Loranger at [eloranger@napo.org](mailto:eloranger@napo.org). With your help and partnership, we know that TOP COPS® will be a tremendous success!

**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 at [NAPOpolice](https://twitter.com/NAPOpolice) for breaking news and updates.**