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Representing America's Finest

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NAPO Participates in National Officer Safety and Wellness Group Meeting

On October 26th, NAPO participated in a meeting of the National Officer Safety and Wellness (OSW) Group, which is comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement associations, research organizations, and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, Bureau of Justice Assistance and National Institute of Justice within the Department of Justice. The aim of the OSW Group is to better understand and respond to the range of issues associated with improving officer safety and wellness.

The focus of this meeting was best practices and considerations around establishing, sustaining, and enhancing first responder and department resilience. The meeting began with a panel discussion around lessons learned from the field regarding officer and department resilience following a mass casualty event. Representatives from the Dallas (TX) Police Department, the Orlando (FL) Police Department and the San Bernardino (CA) Police Department spoke of the tragic events their departments responded to, how it affected officers and what the departments did and are continuing to do to support officers' mental and emotional recovery.

The meeting then moved on to discuss what law enforcement agencies can do to build first responder and department health and resiliency. While no department can prepare its officers for such horrific events like the mass shootings of officers in Dallas or the terrorist attacks in Orlando and San Bernardino, they can begin to put a system in place that puts officer wellness and safety as a top priority. While the discussion mainly focused on ensuring officers are able to take care of their mental wellness through not only mass casualty events, but also the everyday stresses of the job, it also touched on the importance of departments having access to protective gear – including hard body armor, ballistic helmets and long rifles – for all officers. It was noted in the meeting that the Administration's policy on restricting state and local law enforcement's access to this equipment contradicted this important officer safety and wellness issue. NAPO has long argued that access to surplus military equipment is essential to officers' mental and physical safety and wellness.

Other issues discussed included the importance of strong workers compensation programs, peer mentoring programs, regulating stress, and maintaining heart and physical health. The result of this meeting will be some sort of report from the COPS Office outlining best practices, lessons learned and guidelines on promoting officer and department resilience.

NAPO will continue to participate in the National Officer Safety and Wellness Group to ensure that rank and file officers get the support and resources they need to protect and take care of themselves and the communities they serve. If you have any questions about the National Officer Safety and Wellness Group, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

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NAPO Takes Part in DHS Presidential Transition Briefing

On October 28th, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson participated in an intimate briefing for law enforcement representatives by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on their presidential transition plan. Even before a nominee is elected to be President of the United States, the executive branch begins preparing to ensure a smooth transition between the old administration and the new, making certain that programs state and local law enforcement rely on continue uninterrupted.

The DHS presidential transition team is in touch with the Trump and Clinton campaigns, educating them and keeping them abreast of the work of the department and then will coordinate the final transition of the President-elect. DHS's presidential transition officer highlighted a few strategic issues the Department is focused on, particularly around personnel, including: recruitment, the importance of union relationships, staffing shortages that can lead to a public safety issues and pay equity issues for law enforcement personnel.

The team also takes into account lessons learned from previous presidential transitions and emphasizes the importance of open communication with their state and local law enforcement partners during the transition period. The transition officer stated that they have a focused engagement and action plan for the incoming Secretary to address these high priority partnerships to ensure that the relationships carry on to under the new administration.

NAPO looks forward to continuing this conversation with the DHS presidential transition team and to working with other departments as they work to ensure continuity and a seamless transition from the current administration to the next administration.

If you have any questions, please contact Bill Johnson at bjohnson@napo.org.

DOJ Finally Moves on Implementing National Blue Alert System

The Department of Justice (DOJ), after more than a year has passed since the passage of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015, is finally moving on implementing the National Blue Alert Network. The Act that established this network was named after two slain NAPO members and was signed into law by the President on May 19, 2015. NAPO has been pressuring the DOJ to implement the Blue Alert Network and sent a [letter](#) to the Attorney General in August admonishing her for the department's inaction.

The National Blue Alert Network is being run out of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and in a meeting with NAPO the Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator gave an update on the status of the implementation of this vital network. At this time, the COPS Office is researching and compiling the current blue alert system policies that have been set up in twenty-seven states and it will release a report shortly on the state of blue alert systems across the country. Additionally, they are reaching out to states and agencies that currently have blue alerts, most recently Oklahoma where they were hunting the violent fugitive that shot two officers and murdered two people.

The National Blue Alert System will be an integrated system of Blue Alert plans throughout the nation into one national system. The lives of law enforcement officers across the country depend on a fully functioning system being up and running as soon as possible. NAPO will continue working with the DOJ and our state and local government partners to have Blue Alert systems established in all 50 states so that the National Blue Alert System truly will truly be a national system.

NAPO in the News

On October 24th, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson was quoted in a *Wall Street Journal* article entitled, “Americans’ Respect for Police Reaches Highest Level Since 1967, Poll Finds”. The article discussed the new Gallup poll released on October 24th that found that 76% of Americans said they have a “great deal” of respect for their local law enforcement. This is twelve percent above where it was last year and the highest level since 1967. When asked what he believes this poll shows, Johnson stated that “the poll shows that Americans understand that videos of police killing people aren’t the whole picture.” Johnson went on to say:

“The public understands that there are incidents where things go horribly wrong,” Mr. Johnson said. ‘They also understand that policing in the U.S. is the best in the world.’

Mr. Johnson said the killings of police officers had ‘an eye-opening effect on the American public, especially in Dallas where the officers are protecting antipolice protesters and are gunned down.’

The full article is available at: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/americans-respect-for-police-reaches-highest-level-since-1967-poll-finds-1477344780>

NAPO will continue to ensure our members’ voices are heard loud and clear on the Hill, with the Administration, and in the media. If you have any questions about the publication cited above, please contact Bill Johnson at: bjohnson@napo.org.

DOJ Study: Police Should Work in Pairs

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), Department of Justice, released a report called “[Deadly Calls and Fatal Encounters](#)”, which analyzes law enforcement line of duty deaths when officers responded to dispatched calls between 2010 – 2014. The report looked at dispatch calls for robberies, burglaries, shots fired, officer needs assistance, suspicious persons and vehicles, man with gun, disturbances and domestic disputes. It then broke the data down by manner of death, number of officers on the scene, number of officers dispatched, number of officers not waiting for backup and other pertinent details.

Predictably, the report found that dispatched calls for domestic disputes and disturbances were the deadliest calls for officers, accounting for 22% and 18% of line of duty deaths, respectively. The report concluded that the more officers dispatched and responding to a call increased the safety of officers and decreased the potential for a deadly result. While the report expounded on the fact that two or more officers responding to a scene has a life-saving impact, it would not go as far as to call on departments to implement two officer patrol cars, which NAPO has been advocating for to increase officer safety.

The findings of the report support NAPO’s call for two officer patrol units and our insistence that the DOJ support funding for state and local law enforcement agencies to increase their staff to ensure no officer goes on a call alone. NAPO will continue to push for federal support to ensure that police departments are sufficiently staffed to keep their officers and their communities safe. Agencies that prioritize officer safety and the practice of two-officer response should be recognized and supported by the federal government.



Your Nominations Make the Difference for TOP COPS®

This year marks the 24th 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. With your help and partnership, we know that TOP COPS® will be a tremendous success!

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.