



# The Washington Report

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

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September 11, 2017

## **PLEASE HELP OUR BROTHER AND SISTER OFFICERS AFFECTED BY HURRICANES HARVEY & IRMA**

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE MEMBER GROUPS WHO HAVE ALREADY DONATED!!!**

The requests for relief checks are starting to come in. Many, many officers in Texas have completely lost their homes. In addition, Hurricane Irma is now targeting Florida and evacuations have been ordered. **We can anticipate a greater need for Relief Fund donations than ever before.** Attached please find a [donation form](#) that you can fill in and submit. Several of our groups have reposted it to their own members. The form is also up on our Facebook site and webpage ([www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org)) and we have a direct donations link for our Relief Fund up and running on our website.

Here is the link to make donations: <http://www.napo.org/about/how-support-law-enforcement/napo-relief-fund-hurricane-harvey-assistance/>

### **PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR MEMBERS**

We will repeat our requests for contributions to our Relief Fund as long as needed.

Todd Harrison, our national Secretary and the President of the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT), is on the scene of the devastation in South Texas and has already been providing direct relief to all officers affected. He is not asking whether they are CLEAT members or not, only whether they need help.

Right now, Todd says they are receiving abundant donations of T-shirts, underwear, socks, hygiene products, dry clothes, etc. He anticipates needing more, however, in a week or two. In the meantime, NAPO's Relief Fund is up and running. Please consider making your most generous monetary donation. 100 percent of donations will be used to provide direct financial relief to the officers affected. We will rely on the local unions and associations to confirm the damage and losses and will immediately cut checks to the officers.

Thank you for your support and generosity for all our brother and sister officers and their families affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Michael "Mick" McHale, President

Bill Johnson, Executive Director

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# **NAPO Victory! Senate Passes Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act**

In a victory for NAPO, the Senate passed the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act (S. 597) by voice vote on September 7. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Pat Toomey (R-PA) sponsored the bill, which would eliminate the expected family contribution (EFC) used to determine financial need in the case of a Pell Grant-eligible student whose parent or guardian died in the line of duty. Additionally, children of public safety officers who died in the line of duty would qualify for the maximum Pell Grant award (\$5,920 for 2017-2018) if he or she was less than 24 years old or enrolled at an institution of higher education at the time of the parent or guardian's death. A *Federal Pell Grant*, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants usually are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 87 officers have died in the line of duty so far this year, which is the same number of officers we had lost at this same time last year, one of the deadliest years for law enforcement. There were 135 line of duty deaths 2016. While we will never forget that these brave men and women made the ultimate sacrifice, we must also remember the immense burden that their families bear as a result of their loss. Not only must they endure the tragic, unexpected passing of a loved one, but also the tremendous financial strains that go along with it. These families face financial difficulties ranging from an inability to pay for day-to-day necessities to the deferral or elimination of important educational opportunities for their children.

It is because of our belief that bereaved law enforcement families should not have to face so many difficult decisions that NAPO strongly supports the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act. We thank Senators Casey and Toomey for their leadership on this issue. We now turn our efforts to the House to pass this important bill into law.

If you have any questions about what this bill, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **NAPO on the Hill: Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Act**

NAPO met with House Judiciary Committee staff to discuss the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (H.R. 2228), sponsored by Congresswoman Susan Brooks (R-IN). The Senate version, S. 867, passed the Senate by unanimous consent back in May and we are hoping to use the fact that September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month to pressure the House Judiciary Committee to take up and move this important bill.

The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act will help law enforcement agencies establish or enhance mental health care services for their officers. The legislation would make grants available to initiate peer mentoring pilot programs, develop resources for mental health providers based on the specific mental health challenges faced by law enforcement, and support law enforcement officers by studying the effectiveness of crisis hotlines and annual mental health checks.

According to the National Study of Police Suicides, officers are 2.5 times more likely to die from suicides than from homicides. State and local law enforcement officers are our nation's first responders. They respond to our country's greatest tragedies as well as violent crimes that unfortunately occur more frequently in our communities. They have seen and experienced horrors that they cannot forget, yet they still put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities. It is time that we as a nation recognize the stress and strain of the job and give officers the resources they need to address their emotional and mental wellbeing.

The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act is a priority for NAPO as it is an important step forward in the fight to ensure officers across the country have access to the best mental health services available and feel supported in using those services.

While Judiciary Committee staff recognizes the importance of the bill, there is some concern about where to house the peer mentoring program that the bill establishes. It is not a secret that House Republicans do not like the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program and a few Republican members of the Committee have requested that the peer mentoring program be moved to the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program. NAPO feels strongly that the program belongs in the COPS Office, as that Office has long worked with the law enforcement community on officer safety and wellness and this Program would just get lost under Byrne JAG. Helping departments establish peer mentoring programs is too important to let that happen. We will continue to work with Committee staff and members of the Committee to ensure all concerns are answered and we are able to move the bill as is quickly through Committee.

We will keep our members updated on its status. If you have any questions about this bill, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **Join NAPO for Our Annual Fall Seminar: *Navigating the New Union Environment***

**November 5 – 7, 2017 ~ Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel  
Rosemont, Illinois**

Learn from experts in the field how to effectively advocate for officer safety, respond to legal threats to union dues, how to preserve & grow membership in the changing labor environment, and legislative updates and Trump Administration changes.

**REGISTER & MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS BY OCTOBER 13!**

**[Click here to Register Online](#)**

**Seminar Registration is also attached.** If you have any questions or need additional information please do not hesitate to contact NAPO's Director of Events, Elizabeth Loranger, [eloranger@napo.org](mailto:eloranger@napo.org) or (703) 549-0775.

## **Appropriations Update: NAPO Supports Amendment to Fund COPS Hiring**

The House continues to press forward with moving its Fiscal 2018 omnibus appropriations measure (H.R. 3354), spending the past week debating the bill and amendments and continuing the debate through this week. The measure includes all 12 of the appropriations bills, four of which have already passed the House.

Despite the President including \$207 million for the COPS Hiring Program, an increase over the fiscal 2017 funding level, House Appropriators decided to eliminate the program in the spending measure despite its

importance to the nation's law enforcement community. To rectify this wrong, NAPO worked with Congressmen Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) and Dave Reichert (R-WA), the co-chairs of the House Law Enforcement Caucus, to introduce an amendment (#109) to H.R. 3354 to provide \$100 million in funding for the COPS Hiring Program. NAPO sent a [letter](#) to every member of Congress urging them to support this amendment and ensure the COPS Hiring Program remains strong and robust. The House is expected to continue debate and voting on amendments, including this one, this week.

While the COPS Hiring Program was eliminated, the spending measure is strong on other law enforcement grant programs, including NAPO's other priority grant programs: Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program, and the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA).

H.R. 3354 would fund Byrne JAG at \$500 million, which is almost double the President's proposal and \$24 million more than fiscal 2017. The BVP Program remains steady at \$22.5 million as does MIOTCRA at \$12 million. The spending measure also includes \$20 million for the Adam Walsh Act, \$103 million to fight opioids, \$11 million for anti-meth programs through the COPS Office and \$10 million for active shooter police training.

With the end of the 2017 fiscal year quickly approaching on September 30, Congress gave itself more time to hammer out fiscal 2018 appropriations by passing a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government at FY 2017 levels through December 8. The CR also included \$15.25 billion in aid for victims of Hurricane Harvey and other natural disasters and suspended the national debt limit until December 8.

NAPO will keep our members updated on the status of the Pascrell/Reichert COPS Hiring Amendment. We thank Congressmen Pascrell and Reichert for their continued leadership and dedication to ensuring our nation's law enforcement has the resources and support it needs to efficiently and effectively serve and protect our communities.

If you have any questions, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **NAPO on the Hill: The Kelsey Smith Act**

NAPO met with staff of **Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS)** and **Congressman Kevin Yoder (R-KS)** to discuss the reintroduction of the Kelsey Smith Act, which would require telecommunications companies to give law enforcement information about the location of a subscriber's phone when there is an emergency involving the risk of death or serious physical injury. While current law does not prohibit these companies from giving location information to police in emergencies, it does not require them to do so and there is no uniform standard in the industry for responding to such requests.

In the case of Kelsey Smith, who was tragically abducted and murdered in 2007, it took Verizon four days after the initial emergency request to give law enforcement the geographic coordinates of Kelsey's phone. After the information was received, it only took 45 minutes for law enforcement to find her body. Unfortunately, the Kelsey Smith case is not uncommon. Problems with service provider responsiveness to law enforcement requests are real and widespread.

Given that privacy is currently a hot button issue in Congress, especially with the passage of the Email Privacy Act in the House earlier this year despite law enforcement opposition, Senator Roberts and Congressman Yoder must do a balancing act if they want this legislation to pass. NAPO, together with other law enforcement organizations, are working with the staff to ensure that law enforcement investigations will be helped and not hampered by any privacy protections and notification requirements that are included in the bill to appease civil liberty organizations.

Twenty-three states have passed their own versions of the Kelsey Smith Act. NAPO is working to ensure that Congress passes a federal minimum standard for telecommunications companies to respond to law enforcement emergency geolocation requests so that law enforcement in every state across the country has speedy access to this vital information in emergency situations.

If you have any questions about the specifics of this legislation, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

**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 for breaking news and updates.**