



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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June 2, 2015

The President

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to express concerns with the recent announcement of new restrictions on the ability of law enforcement officers to access critical, defensive, Federal equipment. NAPO urges you to reconsider this policy change, which will endanger the lives of police officers across the nation.

The "Local Law Enforcement Equipment Working Group" has published a list of "prohibited items," which law enforcement officers will no longer be able to acquire via transfer from Federal agencies or purchase using Federally-provided funds, and a list of "controlled items," which law enforcement departments may acquire through a burdensome process. This policy reform will severely inhibit the ability of law enforcement departments to acquire critical equipment to keep their officers safe.

NAPO is most concerned that the list of "controlled items" includes purely defensive equipment, such as helmets and shields. Adding such equipment to the "controlled items" list will further endanger the lives of law enforcement officers, who have increasingly become targets of revenge and ambush attacks.

Defensive equipment, such as helmets and shields, are not optional pieces of equipment in dangerous situations – situations in which officers increasingly find themselves. Given the increasing number and severity of attacks on police across the country, this is the worst possible time to withhold defensive and protective equipment from American police officers.

NAPO is extremely concerned that the legitimate and well-demonstrated needs of officers are being overlooked in favor of appeasing the boisterous demands of full-time agitators and protesters. Law enforcement agencies should not be required to undergo a cumbersome and impractical process to obtain equipment to protect the men and women who work tirelessly to protect our communities.

We strongly urge you to reconsider this policy reform, and work with us to ensure the protection of our law enforcement officers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director