



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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EXECUTIVE OFFICERS April 23, 2018

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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON, CAE

Executive Director and
General Counsel

The Honorable Charlie Baker
Governor
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 280
Boston, Massachusetts 12133

Dear Governor Baker:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) and the 241,000 rank-and-file law enforcement officers we represent, including the members of the Massachusetts Coalition of Police (MASS C.O.P.), we write to express our sincerest sympathy to the Massachusetts law enforcement community and the people they serve for the murder of Yarmouth Police Officer Sean Gannon.

Officer Gannon was a member of MASS C.O.P. and NAPO and we deeply feel the sadness, horror and anger at the killing of this young hero. We must not dwell in these feelings, but rather turn them into actions to ensure violence such as this against law enforcement officers does not happen again. The current law led to a dangerous career criminal remaining on our streets, putting officers, particularly Officer Gannon, and other Massachusetts citizens in harm's way.

At the Federal level, NAPO has pushed against policies that weaken mandatory minimum sentences for high risk, career violent criminals, particularly those with prior gun charges like Officer Gannon's killer. We also strongly support new laws that would hold those who assault, kill or attempt to kill law enforcement officers accountable. Establishing stricter penalties for violence against officers and ensuring that cop-killers do not escape justice will deter violent crimes like the one exacted on Officer Gannon. Any persons contemplating harming an officer must know that they will face serious punishments. Increased penalties make important differences in the attitudes of criminals toward public safety officers and ensure protection for the community.

Further, it is vital that you establish a Blue Alert System in Massachusetts to help ensure information on credible threats to officers is quickly and widely disseminated so that officers have advance warning and can apprehend the criminal before he or she can do more harm. NAPO pushed for the establishment of a National Blue Alert Network to coordinate the states' Blue Alert Systems to protect our nation's law enforcement officers. It is vital that all states participate in the National Blue Alert Network, and as 28 states have already established such systems, there is no excuse for Massachusetts to not create its own system to protect its officers.

Finally, it is important that the State and Federal governments recognize the sacrifice that our officers make in choosing to serve their communities and country. NAPO has long worked to ensure that the families of officers who have given the ultimate sacrifice are given the financial support they need through the United States Department of Justice's Public Safety Officer's Benefits (PSOB) Program. By signing into law the increase of the Massachusetts public safety line of duty death benefit to \$300,000, doubling the previous benefit, you understand the importance of ensuring officers have the peace of mind that something happens to them in the course of their duties that their families will be financially secure.

More must be done, however, than provide for the families of fallen officers. You must ensure that violent criminals like Officer Gannon's killer are taken off our streets and stay off. You must create a Blue Alert system to alert officers of violence promised or exacted against their brothers and sisters. You must ensure those cop-killers and attempted killers face the strongest penalties for the crimes they commit against officers.

NAPO urges you, on behalf of the officers putting their lives on the line for the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, not to fall behind in protecting your officers and their families.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us through our national office at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,



Michael McHale
President

Sincerely,



William J. Johnson
Executive Director