



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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December 4, 2015

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Speaker, Senator McConnell, Representative Pelosi and Senator Reid:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to urge you to support efforts to restore law enforcement's access to military surplus equipment available through the Federal government. Unfortunately, Wednesday's shooting in San Bernardino, California, is just another tragic example this year alone of why this equipment is a necessity for state and local law enforcement.

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

Programs like the Department of Defense's 1033 program and grant programs at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security have been vital resources in allowing state and local law enforcement to acquire items used in search and rescue operations, disaster response, and active shooter situations that they otherwise would not be able to afford. This equipment has not led to the "militarization" of police, but rather has proven to be essential in protecting communities against violent criminals with increasing access to sophisticated weaponry, IEDs, body armor and sometimes even armored vehicles.

The limitations on military surplus equipment for state and local law enforcement are a result of Executive Order 13688 and the Law Enforcement Equipment Working Group that it created. On October 1, 2015, the recommendations of the Working Group went into effect and the Department of Defense is currently in the process of recalling lifesaving military surplus equipment from state and local law enforcement agencies. Not only are law enforcement across the country now scrambling to fill in the equipment gaps left behind, but they must also develop

new training policies and expand their inventory reporting to include equipment previously outside of the Federal purview to ensure that they do not “misapply” the use of such equipment.

Given the unfortunately high number of mass shootings that have occurred in 2015 alone and the fact that state and local law enforcement are the first line of defense, it is improper that the federal government has questioned the appropriateness of state and local agencies acquiring such equipment for the protection of their communities.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that state and local law enforcement have the resources they need to safely and effectively protect our communities. Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director