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The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations

Representing America's Finest

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NAPO Meets with DOJ Office of Justice Program Regarding PSOB

On April 18th, NAPO met with staff of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Department of Justice (DOJ), to discuss the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program, particularly our concerns with how the program has been run and our hope for OJP's support for the PSOB Improvement Act (S. 419). The meeting was an in-depth conversation about the ongoing concerns NAPO has with the program, the importance of the legislation and our support for the regulations that were proposed last year. This meeting was important as OJP has a new acting director as well as new leadership staff who are not very familiar with the program.

In our efforts to move the PSOB Improvement Act, we have been actively engaged with the DOJ about the bill and Attorney General Sessions' support for the bill while he was a Senator. The House Judiciary Committee has been wavering between supporting the legislation as is and considering major rewrites of the bill, which we oppose. As the DOJ's support for the bill is important to House Judiciary Chairman Robert Goodlatte (R-VA), we are working with the Department to ensure that the Committee gets on board with the bill in its current form, with only minor modifications. Our goal, which the DOJ indicated it supports, is to have the PSOB Improvement Act passed by the Senate in the next week or two and then be taken up by the House during National Police Week (week of May 15).

The PSOB Improvement Act is so important because it would return the PSOB Program to a presumptive benefit and restore the "substantial weight" standard that requires PSOB to give substantial weight to the findings of federal, state, and local agencies as to the cause of the public safety officer's death or disability. It would ensure that children of fallen or disabled public safety officers would still be eligible for education benefits if an adjudication delay causes them to age out of benefit eligibility before their claim is approved. It would increase transparency through weekly and biannual public reports on the status of claims. These programmatic changes, taken together with the proposed regulations we are waiting to be finalized, would greatly improve the performance of the PSOB Program, increase transparency and accountability, and help reduce the unacceptable case backlog.

The OJP staff showed understanding of our frustrations with the program and the need to fix it, but they were unable to specifically support the provisions within the bill as the Department has not formally taken a position on it. OJP seems to be more supportive of public safety officers, in keeping with the overall new attitude towards law enforcement of the Attorney General and the Administration. Staff share our concerns with how the program is being currently run and want to work with us in a collaborative manner to make it better for officers and their families.

The next PSOB stakeholder meeting is scheduled for May 4th, during which we will meet OJP's Acting Assistant Attorney General Alan Hanson and Bureau of Justice Assistance Acting Director Tracey Trautman. NAPO has previously worked with Assistant Acting Director Trautman as she was part of the Law Enforcement

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Equipment Working Group established pursuant to President Obama's Executive Order 13688, which restricted state and local law enforcement's access to surplus military equipment.

We hope to have the DOJ's full support of the PSOB Improvement Act and see it pass Congress during National Police Week. We continue to work with the bill's sponsors – Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Congressman Peter King (R-NY) – to ensure that the bill continues moving forward towards our goal. We will keep our members updated on the status of this important bill. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO on the Hill: PSOB Meeting with House Judiciary Staff

NAPO met with House Judiciary Committee Chairman Robert Goodlatte's (R-VA) staff who is handling the PSOB Improvement Act to discuss where the Committee is in supporting the bill and any possible language changes the Chairman may want to make to the bill. It has been a long couple of months working with the Judiciary Committee on this bill as staff seemed adamant that the Chairman wanted to make significant changes that would weaken the bill. NAPO has stood strong in opposition to these changes, but we have continued to try to work through the concerns with staff, including working to get Department of Justice support for the legislation.

In our latest meeting, staff indicated that the Chairman was backing off most of his amendments to the bill and that he was willing to stick to minor changes that all parties could agree on. Given that we want the House and the Senate versions of this bill to be identical, Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), the sponsor of the Senate version (S. 419, which passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 9th), would have to agree to amend his bill on the Senate floor before it came down for a vote. Chairman Grassley has been a stalwart supporter of our efforts to improve the PSOB Program and stood with us as we opposed significant changes to the bill. The most recent suggested changes to the bill as proposed by Judiciary Committee staff are relatively minor and seem acceptable to all parties.

It is our hope that a final agreement on language will happen this week so that the Senate can take up and pass the PSOB Improvement Act in the next couple of weeks. Congressman Peter King (R-NY) would either introduce the House version or would shepherd the Senate-passed bill through Committee and to the House floor for a vote during National Police Week. There is still much work to be done to ensure this happens on this timeline, but we are certain that the PSOB Improvements Act will be passed by Congress this year whether or not its during Police Week.

If you have any questions, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO on the Hill: Meetings with House Judiciary Committee Members and the House Majority Leader's Office

NAPO, together with other major national law enforcement organizations, made the last of our rounds, meeting with staff of last few members of the House Judiciary Committee we had yet to meet with to discuss our priority legislation for this Congress. We also met with staff for **House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)** to discuss the outcomes of our meetings with Judiciary members and the outlook for bringing our priority legislation to the floor for a vote during National Police Week (the week of May 15th). The House Judiciary Committee has bill markups planned for April 26th and May 3rd, and Committee staff told us they are doing their best to get as many of our bills as possible on the schedule for markup on these two dates. Bills approved during these markups will be eligible to move to the floor for a vote during Police Week. Given the timeframe,

the legislation we want to move during Police Week are those bills that are bipartisan and have the support of the majority of the Committee in order that they can move quickly to the House and Senate floors.

For our final pre-Police Week meetings, we met with the offices of **Representatives John Nadler (D-NY), Andy Biggs (R-AZ) and Jamie Raskin (D-MD)**. Specifically, we discussed the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Improvement Act, the Back the Blue Act, the Thin Blue Line Act, the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act, the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act, the Honoring Hometown Heroes Act, the Protecting Lives Using Surplus (PLUS) Equipment Act, the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, and the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. (Please visit NAPO's website, www.napo.org, for more information about each of these bills which have been profiled in past *Washington Reports*.)

Some of these bills will be heavier lifts to move than others given the current atmosphere in Congress as they pertain to more contentious issues such as surplus military equipment for state and local law enforcement and increased penalties for the assault, attempted killing and killing of a state or local law enforcement officer. The PSOB Improvements Act, the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act, the Honoring Hometown Heroes Act, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act, and the Children of Fallen Heroes Act are bills that have a greater chance of moving quickly through the House and Senate in a bipartisan fashion. NAPO is using these meetings to shed light on the importance of bills such as the Back the Blue Act and the PLUS Equipment Act and lay the ground work for the eventual movement of these bills. With a Republican President, backed by a Republican Congress, we feel our chances to pass these important bills are better than they have been.

Our work over the past few weeks meeting with offices has garnered our bills new cosponsors and support, giving us the backing needed to pressure the House Judiciary Committee to markup many of these bills on either April 26th or May 3rd. In our meeting with Majority Leader McCarthy's office, staff indicated that we still had the support of House leadership for our efforts and they are willing to take up the bills we can move through committee for a vote on the House floor during Police Week.

NAPO will keep our members update on our efforts and the status of these priority bills. We feel strongly that we have built enough support that those bills that do not move during Police Week will be moved soon after. If you have any questions about NAPO's meetings on the Hill or the bills addressed, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

2017 Lobby Day Legislative Update & NAPO's Annual Legislative Awards Luncheon

Please join NAPO on May 11th for our Legislative Day on Capitol Hill. Use this opportunity to lobby Congressional Representatives and Senators on behalf of your members concerning the issues which affect law enforcement. Prior to lobbying Capitol Hill, plan to attend NAPO's Legislative Breakfast for an update on NAPO's legislative priorities, results to date from the 115th Congress, and to receive handouts to use during your Hill visits.

While on Capitol Hill, be sure to stop by NAPO's Congressional Luncheon, where several Congressmen and Senators will be recognized for their continued support of Law Enforcement and is a great opportunity to mingle with members of Congress and their staff.

The registration fee of \$150.00 per person includes the Legislative Update Breakfast, handouts, and the Legislative Recognition Lunch. Please contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, at (800) 322-6278 or eloranger@napo.org if you have any questions regarding the seminar or hotel arrangements.

*For assistance setting up your Capitol Hill appointments, contact Andy Edmiston, NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, at (800) 322-6276 or aedmiston@napo.org, **by May 1st**.*

Schedule of Events

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Legislative Update Breakfast	Omni Shoreham Hotel
10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Congressional Member Office Visits	Capitol Hill
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	NAPO Legislative Awards Luncheon	U.S. Capitol Visitors Center Room HVC-201

Register today [online](#), fax your [registration form](#) to (703) 684-0515 or email it to Amy Curry at acurry@napo.org.

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.