



The Washington Report

The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations

Representing America's Finest

December 5, 2016

NAPO Participates in Trump DOJ Presidential Transition Team Meeting

On December 1, 2016, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson and Governmental Affairs Director Andy Edmiston participated in a meeting with President-elect Trump's transition team for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to discuss law enforcement's top priorities for the new Administration. The meeting was run by former Attorney General and TOP COP Awards Selection Committee member Ed Meese and was attended by several staff for the Trump transition team and staff of the next Attorney General, Senator Jeff Sessions.

In the meeting, representatives of the major national law enforcement organizations laid out their top priorities for the Trump administration and there was unprecedented unity in the issues every organization wanted to see tackled by the President-elect and the new Attorney General. The issues of consensus ranged from repeal of President Obama's executive order curtailing state and local law enforcement's access to surplus military equipment to ending sanctuary cities to federal support for law enforcement through funding, resources and general support for the officers on the street.

While all of the organizations present agreed that there must be increased penalties for those who harm or target for harm law enforcement officers, NAPO was alone in our suggestions regarding what the DOJ can do about it. While we all support the Thin Blue Line Act, the Back the Blue Act and the Blue Lives Matter Act, NAPO believes the Attorney General has the power to extend protections to state and local law enforcement without the passage of legislation. NAPO strongly urged the transition team to enact new federal criminal provisions to address (1) the assault and murder of and federally-funded local law enforcement officers, such as those officers whose agencies receive aid from the Departments of Justice or Homeland Security; and (2) the assault and murder of state and local officers engaged in the protection of federally recognized civil rights, such as those officers attacked while safeguarding protests.

We also advocated for the appointment of an Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division who will work collaboratively with law enforcement and ensure federal prosecution, where applicable, of those who commit crimes against officers. Appointments such as these will make the difference in framing the relationship between the DOJ and state and local law enforcement. NAPO also asked the transition team to consider who the President-elect nominates to the Supreme Court, as the new justice will have a significant impact on many issues faced by law enforcement officers today.

After this meeting, NAPO is confident that President-elect Trump has law enforcement's back and that we will see many changes within the DOJ that will better support the officers on the street. We look forward to continue working with the transition team as they set up the next Administration. If you have any questions about the meeting, please contact Bill Johnson at bjohnson@napo.org.

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NAPO Victory! Senate Passes PSOB Improvement Act

In a victory for NAPO, the Senate passed the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Improvement Act of 2016 (S. 2944) by unanimous consent on November 30th. The bill, introduced by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), would tackle the issues of transparency and the timeliness of case determinations within the PSOB program, and protect the ability of survivors, disabled officers and their families to get the benefits they so rightly deserve.

Importantly, this bill 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.

It is a priority for NAPO that we ensure the PSOB Program is processing and deciding claims in a timely manner and that the process is transparent and straightforward for those who have lost their loved ones or have become seriously disabled in the line of duty. NAPO thanks Senators Grassley, Gillibrand, Leahy and Cornyn for their leadership on this important issue.

We are now working diligently with House and Judiciary Committee leadership to get the PSOB Improvement Act out of Committee and on the House floor for a vote before the end of session, which is expected to be December 9th.

In addition to the changes this important legislation will bring, the DOJ is working to ensure that the two PSOB proposed rules will go into effect before the end of the Obama Administration. The changes these two rules make compliment the PSOB Improvement Act and will significantly improve the PSOB Program, particularly if the PSOB Office takes into account NAPO's comments in the final rules. The final rules are said to be released sometime before the end of the year.

We will keep our members up to date on the status of the legislation and the final PSOB regulations. If you have any questions about the PSOB Program or the PSOB Improvement Act please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

NAPO Victory! House Passes NAPO Endorsed Criminal Justice and Mental Health Reforms

On November 30th, the House passed the 21st Century Cures Act, a sweeping medical innovation package that includes new research funding, mental health and criminal justice reforms, and grants to fight opioid abuse. The package also includes language to improve the nation's mental health system and \$1 billion over two years to help fight against opioid abuse, including ensuring law enforcement has access to anti-overdose drugs such as naloxone.

The 21st Century Cures Act includes two important mental health and criminal justice measures that NAPO endorsed: (1) the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act which strengthens federal programs related to mental health in the criminal justice system by enhancing the ability of families and communities to identify mental illness; and (2) the Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act, which would update the Mentally Ill Offender and Treatment Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) and facilitate collaboration among the criminal

justice, juvenile justice, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems to ensure those with mental illness receive the treatment and help they need.

Key provisions of the mental health/criminal justice sections of the Cures Act include:

- Reauthorization and extension of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA), an essential funding mechanism that supports the use of mental health courts and crisis intervention teams in local law enforcement agencies.
- Amends MIOTCRA to allow the Attorney General to use existing authorized funds to award grants to non-profit organizations for the creation of a National Criminal Justice and Mental Health Training Center. This entity would coordinate best practices on responding to mental illness in the criminal justice system, and would provide technical assistance to governmental agencies who wish to implement these best practices.
- Authorizes resources for expanded training activities, providing more officers with a basic understanding of the issues involved when responding situations with individuals with mental health crises.

NAPO worked throughout the year to move these bills in any way possible and it is a win for us that they were included in what is considered must-pass legislation. The Senate is expected to take up and pass the 21st Century Cures Act this week. We thank Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Al Franken (D-MN) and Representatives Doug Collins (R-GA) and Martha McSalley (R-AZ) for their leadership and support of this important issue.

House Passes NDAA Conference Report

In a victory for NAPO and our efforts to overturn President Obama's executive order restricting state and local law enforcement's access to lifesaving, surplus military equipment, the House passed on December 2nd the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), without a provision that would have codified the executive order. NAPO exerted every effort over the past several months during conference negotiations to ensure the provision did not make it into the final conference report and its exclusion speaks volumes about the support within Congress for law enforcement having access to this equipment.

While we did not get the executive order reversed in the NDAA, the final bill that passed the House ameliorates some of its harmful consequences and lays the groundwork for the Trump Administration to repeal the executive order in its entirety. NAPO looks forward to working with the Trump Administration to ensure quick repeal of the executive order in 2017.

NAPO in the News

On November 27th, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson was interviewed for a *Washington Times* article entitled, "Police hopeful Donald Trump will usher in new era of respect for law enforcement". The article discusses how police across the country are hoping that under President Trump there will be stronger support for law enforcement and recognition of the difficult jobs officers do day in and day out. Johnson pointed out that who the President-elect nominates to fill certain key appointments will impact the relationship between the federal government and state and local law enforcement.

“Bill Johnson, executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations, said his group will be looking for strong allies within the Justice Department.

‘Whoever is in charge of the Civil Rights Division, they must have close and trusted relationships with police officers and agencies,’ he said. ‘The Obama administration failed miserably in that regard.’”

Johnson went on to state that the policies supported and advocated by the Trump Administration will also be key to changing the attitude towards our nation’s police officers.

“The National Association of Police Organizations is among those urging Mr. Trump to support legislation on a national level that would make the murder or attempted murder of a police officer a federal crime.

‘At one level it would send a powerful message that this president is saying this Justice Department is different — they stand up for the men and women of law enforcement,’ Mr. Johnson said. ‘Given the current climate and the tacit support by the administration of these violent protests, that would be a powerful change.’

Adding federal prosecutors to the equation would also bring resources beyond those of state or local attorneys, he said.”

The full article is available at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/nov/27/police-hopeful-donald-trump-will-usher-in-new-era/>

On November 30th, Johnson was quoted in a *Washington Post* article entitled, “Name of Ohio State officer who shot attacker released almost immediately. Is that right?” The article discussed the varying views of when the name of an officer involved in a shooting should be publicly released.

“Bill Johnson, executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations, noted that after Officer Wilson’s name and address were released in the Ferguson case, the officer and his family were harassed and had to move. ‘If the use of force is controversial,’ Johnson said, ‘that can lead to death threats against an officer and a family. There has to be some recognition of that on the part of police agency administrators.’

The full article is available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2016/11/30/name-of-ohio-state-officer-who-shot-attacker-released-almost-immediately-is-that-right/?utm_term=.469ae3f791a5

NAPO will continue to ensure our members’ voices are heard loud and clear on the Hill, with the Administration, and in the media. If you have any questions about the publication cited above, please contact Bill Johnson at: bjohnson@napo.org.

NAPO Victory! Congress Passes Justice for All Reauthorization Act

In another year-end victory for NAPO, the House passed the Justice for All Reauthorization Act (JFAA) on November 29th, sending it to the President’s desk to be signed into law. The Senate passed the JFAA on June 16, 2016. NAPO supported the JFAA when it was originally passed in 2004 and we worked to ensure that it was reauthorized.

The JFAA improves and ensures public confidence in the criminal justice system. This legislation continues and improves upon the important provisions of the original JFAA, which increased resources devoted to DNA and other forensic technology, established safeguards to prevent wrongful convictions, and enhanced protections for crime victims. The bill strengthens services for crime victims and provides support to state and local governments to use DNA evidence to convict guilty offenders and exonerate the innocent. We thank Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX) for their leadership on this important bill and their continued support of the criminal justice community.

NAPO's 29TH ANNUAL PENSION & BENEFITS SEMINAR

Please join NAPO at our 29th Annual Police, Fire, EMS and Municipal Employee Pension & Benefits Seminar February 26 - 28, 2017 at Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress in Orlando, Florida.

Thanks to the assistance of our impressive advisory board, we are receiving overwhelming responses to our seminar. Our goal is to educate pension and union representatives, along with their providers, on the latest issues surrounding the pensions and benefits industry.

This year's key issues include: Economic and Political Updates, Asset Allocations, Alternative Investments, Department of Labor's New Fiduciary Rules, Rising Health Care Costs, The Imposition of the "Cadillac Tax" on Public Safety Plans, just to name a few.

Take an active role in improving the future of your fund by [registering](#) for this informative seminar. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, at (800) 322-6276 or email eloranger@napo.org.

Register by January 10, 2017 for early bird rates!



Your Nominations Make the Difference for TOP COPS®

This year marks the 24th year NAPO has produced the TOP COPS Awards®. The awards dinner will take place on Friday, May 12, 2017, again coinciding with Police Week. The TOP COPS Awards Dinner will be at the Omni Shoreham Hotel located in Washington, D.C. Over the next few months we will be asking for your assistance in three major areas in which you, our members, can help to ensure the success of TOP COPS®: nominations, sponsorships, and show attendance. Today, we want to ask for your assistance with the first and most fundamental component, nominations.

TOP COPS® is unique in that it is a peer nominated award. However, one of the greatest struggles we have faced in the past is getting the nomination form out to officers nationwide. We are asking you to assist us in making this happen. **It is our goal this year to see all 50 states represented with a nominee.** While we appreciate and welcome nominations from the executive level, we would really like to see the nomination form circulated among *your* members.

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The nomination form is attached and can be downloaded from the NAPO website, <http://www.napo.org/files/5814/5583/4244/NominationForm2017.pdf>. Please feel free to duplicate and post it anywhere you feel it is appropriate. We would especially like to see forms posted in association offices and departments with the hope that your members will feel inclined to nominate the great cases/officers they have come into contact with over the past year. We would also like to ask you to consider including the nomination form in your association publication, on your website, or as a hand out at your next meeting.

If you have other thoughts or ideas as to how to get the word out about this most worthwhile event, please contact Elizabeth Loranger at eloranger@napo.org. With your help and partnership, we know that TOP COPS® will be a tremendous success!

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.