



# The Washington Report

**The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations**

*Representing America's Finest*

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**January 9, 2017**

## **Thin Blue Line Act Introduced in House**

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the first day of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL) wasted no time and re-introduced the Thin Blue Line Act (H.R. 115). Congressman Buchanan has been a staunch supporter of this bill in past congresses and has taken up the torch of championing this important issue. NAPO has let Congressman Buchanan know that we stand ready to support with any efforts necessary to pass this important legislation.

The Thin Blue Line Act would make the targeting or killing of a local police officer, firefighter, or first responder an aggravating factor in death penalty determinations in federal court. This would be applicable whether they were murdered on duty, because of the performance of their duty, or because of their status as a public official.

This bill is critical, as law enforcement officer assaults, injuries, and deaths have increased sharply in recent years. In 2016 alone, ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers increased by 167 percent. Establishing stricter penalties for those who harm or target for harm law enforcement officers will deter crime. Any persons contemplating harming an officer must know that they will face serious punishments. NAPO strongly believes that increased penalties make important differences in the attitudes of criminals toward public safety officers, and ensure protection for the community.

We thank Congressman Buchanan for his leadership on this issue and continued support of the law enforcement community and we look forward to working with him to get this important legislation enacted into law.

## **NAPO on the Hill: Meeting with Senator Grassley, Sheriffs and the ISPA in Support of Senator Sessions for AG**

NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson, Governmental Affairs Director Andy Edmiston and Iowa State Police Association First Vice President Tim Pillack met with Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman, Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and members of the National Sheriffs Association to discuss our support for Senator Jeff Sessions to be the next U.S. Attorney General. Chairman Grassley indicated his strong support for Senator Sessions and stated his appreciation for law enforcements' endorsement of the Senator for Attorney General.

Senator Sessions served as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama and the Alabama Attorney General before joining the Senate in 1997. He is a respected member of the Judiciary Committee and has worked closely with NAPO on several of our top legislative priorities.

Senator Sessions cosponsored the Thin Blue Line Act and spoke alongside NAPO leadership at a press conference in support of the legislation last year. He also cosponsored the Lifesaving Gear for Police Act,

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which would rescind President Obama's executive order that restricts state and local law enforcements' access to surplus military equipment. He is a staunch supporter of stronger immigration enforcement and cosponsored the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act.

Further, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he worked with NAPO and the law enforcement community to amend the Electronic Communications Privacy Act Amendments Act during Committee markup to include emergency exceptions to the warrant requirement. He has also been a voice of opposition to expansive sentencing reform and supports maintaining current federal mandatory minimum sentences. Senator Sessions has shown a keen understanding of law enforcement's needs and NAPO is proud to support his nomination for Attorney General.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will be holding a confirmation hearing for Senator Sessions on January 10 – 11, which NAPO will be attending. The Committee must approve his nomination before he can be confirmed by the entire Senate. While there is some strong opposition from Democrats to the nomination, it is unlikely that the Senate will fail to confirm one of their colleagues and NAPO is working to ensure that no one holds up his confirmation. NAPO believes that Senator Sessions will be an ally to NAPO on many of our key Department of Justice issues and we have let him know that we are here to assist in any way necessary.

## **NAPO on the Hill: Meetings with House and Senate Judiciary Staff on 115<sup>th</sup> Priorities**

NAPO, together with other national law enforcement organizations, met with Republican and Democratic staff of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to discuss our top priorities for the committees this Congress and to learn what issues the Committees will tackle first. Issues that NAPO and the other law enforcement organizations highlighted included protecting Department of Justice (DOJ) state and local law enforcement grant programs – specifically the importance of the COPS Hiring program and the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) program – as well as increased penalties for crimes against law enforcement and increase protections for officers, reforming the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program, defending the DOJ's asset forfeiture program, and ensuring law enforcement's needs are met in any attempt to amend the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA).

The Senate Judiciary Committee will be dealing with the confirmation hearings for Senator Sessions for Attorney General and then for the nominee to fill the U.S. Supreme Court vacancy before it can truly start to work on any of our priority legislation. Chairman Grassley has indicated that sentencing and corrections reform will be the first legislative issue the Committee tackles. The House Judiciary Committee, on the other hand, plans to begin the year focused on a package of child exploitation bills, reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), and then its criminal justice reform package. House Committee staff did state that they have marked their calendars for National Police Week and look forward to moving a set of law enforcements' priority legislation for either Committee markup or final House passage that week.

In the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, NAPO opposed Chairman Grassley's Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act because it made simultaneous sweeping changes to federal sentencing guidelines and the nation's correctional system. These changes would all be on top of the 2014 sentencing guidelines issued by the U.S. Sentencing Commission, which are expected to result in the release of 47,000 federal prisoners when all is said and done. This is a significant strain on state and local agencies that are currently facing tough budgets and will be dealing with these individuals in their communities. NAPO will continue to work with the Committee to ensure our concerns are met and that state and local agencies get the resources and support they need to support such drastic changes to our criminal justice system.

While the first half of 2017 may prove to be slow on moving our priority legislation, NAPO will use it as a time to lay the groundwork necessary for a busy and successful second half of the year.

## **NAPO Condemns Anti-Police Painting Hung in U.S. Capitol**

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, [NAPO sent Congressman William Lacy Clay \(D-MO\) a letter](#) condemning in the strongest possible terms the anti-police painting he chose to hang in a hallway in our nation's Capitol. The painting depicts police officers at a scene in Ferguson, Missouri as animals – including a pig – aiming guns at protestors and intimating that all police are racist and intending to use force against African Americans. By allowing this painting to be hung, NAPO feels the Congressman is further endangering officers on the street, officers who put their lives on the line every day to protect our communities.

At a time when police and community relations are strained and officers are being killed by ambush at the highest rate in two decades, it is utterly irresponsible a U.S. Congressman to allow such hate speech to be hung in the U.S. Capitol. The painting is beyond offensive; it is reprehensible. It is such anti-police rhetoric and imagery that inspired the murder five Dallas police officers and three Baton Rouge officers in July and more recently the ambush-style killings of two officers in Des Moines and a San Antonio detective in November.

While NAPO supports an individual's right to free speech, we do not support speech that condemns an entire community for the acts of a few. NAPO called on Congressman Clay to immediately take down the painting and the hatred it portrays for the law enforcement community.

While Congressman Clay did not remove the painting, Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) took it upon himself to remove the painting on January 6<sup>th</sup> and return it to Congressman Clay's office. House Law Enforcement Caucus Chair Dave Reichert (R-IN) also spoke out against the hanging of the painting and urged Congressman Clay to take it down. NAPO applauds Congressmen Reichert and Duncan for standing up for the men and women who serve our country as law enforcement officers. We hope that Congressman Clay will refrain from putting the painting back up in the Capitol.

## **NAPO's Legislative Scorecard for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congresses**

Find out how your representatives and senators voted on NAPO's priority issues by reviewing NAPO's final "Legislative Scorecard" for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, which is available on our [website](#) under Washington Report. The results include all recorded votes that impacted NAPO's members in the House of Representatives and Senate during the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress (2015-2016). The "Legislative Scorecard" includes the following documents:

- Description of the votes studied during this Congress, as well as NAPO's stance on each of the votes;
- Spreadsheets, which detail House & Senate support by member and state.
- A map depicting the level of Congressional support for the law enforcement community across the country;
- A chart reflecting support by political party in the House and the Senate; and
- A table detailing the average level of support in the House and Senate by state.

Also, NAPO's updated "Sponsor/Cosponsor" spreadsheet for all legislation that NAPO took positions on in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress is available at the following link: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/sponsor-cosponsor-spreadsheet/>. The spreadsheet accompanies the final "Legislative Positions" document, which is available at the following link: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/legislative-priorities/>

The "Sponsor/Cosponsor" spreadsheet is a useful tool to check if your members of Congress have supported pieces of legislation that will impact our members.

As we are now in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress (2017-2018), we will be building a new “Legislative Positions” document and “Sponsor/Cosponsor” spreadsheet as bills of significance to our members get introduced. We will update these documents regularly, and continue to ensure our voice is heard on Capitol Hill.

If you have any questions about the “Legislative Scorecard” or any of the legislation that NAPO is currently working, please contact Andy Edmiston at: [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

**Please monitor NAPO’s website, [www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org), and Facebook page: National Association of Police Organizations, and follow us on Twitter at NAPOpolice for breaking news and updates.**

## 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](mailto:eloranger@napo.org).

*Register by January 10, 2017 for early bird rates!*



## TOP COPS<sup>®</sup> NOMINATIONS DUE JANUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>

This year marks the 24<sup>th</sup> year NAPO has produced the TOP COPS Awards<sup>®</sup>. 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<sup>®</sup>: nominations, sponsorships, and show attendance. Today, we want to ask for your assistance with the first and most fundamental component, nominations.

TOP COPS<sup>®</sup> 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

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appreciate and welcome nominations from the executive level, we would really like to see the nomination form circulated among *your* members.

The nomination form is attached and can be downloaded from the NAPO website, <http://www.napo.org/files/5814/5583/4244/NominationForm2017.pdf>.

**TOP COPS® nominations are due by January 13, 2017!** We urge all of our member organizations to submit nominations as soon as possible in order that we can ensure officers across the nation are recognized for their actions above and beyond the call of duty.

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](mailto:eloranger@napo.org). With your help and partnership, we know that TOP COPS® will be a tremendous success!