



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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Here are a few thoughts regarding police unions/associations to keep in mind in light of the continuous political attacks against us:

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1. Police unions are not running the Departments, management is.
2. Collective bargaining agreements are not forced upon the City by the union, they are bargained over, voted on, agreed to, and ratified by both the City and the officers. They are mutual agreements.
3. Police unions do not recruit, evaluate, screen, hire, train, equip, test, and put out on the street police officers. The City and the Department does that. We don't even meet the new union members until the City selects them as new officers. We're not the ones who hire or train problem officers. We are often the ones, however, who try to improve officer safety, communications, training, policies, etc.
4. When an officer receives a complaint against him/her, and they are subject to potential discipline or dismissal, the union has a legal obligation to represent the officer if they are a member of the union, and oftentimes has a legal obligation to at least assist the officer if they are in the bargaining unit, even if they are not a union member. Unions are not there to "defend bad cops." Unions are following the law which requires them to defend the workplace rights of the men and women in the Department, whether the union likes it or not.
5. Unions also do not define the bargaining unit; the state labor relations agency usually does.
6. Unions do not just grab power within a Department, men and women vote for whatever union they want, or they can vote for no union at all.
7. Most chiefs belong to the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and most sheriffs belong to the National Sheriffs Association. The IACP was originally called "The National Union of Chiefs of Police of the United States and Canada" before they changed their name. So it's not accurate for chiefs and sheriffs to say that unions make running a Department harder, they have no problem with their own unions/associations.
8. Due process rights are part of every state Constitution and our national Constitution. Unions did not invent them or make them up to protect officers. They are part of the highest law in the land, laws that all officers and elected officials, chiefs, and mayors, swear an oath to uphold.
9. Due process rights do not "make it impossible to fire a bad cop." Instead, they set out a road map for how to discipline or even fire an officer legally.
10. Unions and collective bargaining rights most certainly do not prevent officers from doing exemplary, even sacrificial, work. Exhibit A: Every single police officer and fire fighter killed in the 9/11 attacks was represented by their own rank-and-file union. These men and women did not "hide behind some union or contract", they remained at their posts, trying to save others, even as the buildings collapsed upon them. Exhibit B: I'm sure that many if not all the men and women that your own agency has lost in the line of duty over the years were union members, too.