



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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May 28, 2015

The Honorable Steve Cohen
United States House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cohen:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to express our opposition to the Police Training and Independent Review Act (H.R. 2302).

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.

NAPO is concerned that the Police Training and Independent Review Act pursues its goals through penalties to the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program - a critical resource for law enforcement.

This legislation has the potential to jeopardize public safety through Byrne JAG penalties. The Byrne JAG Program provides resources for multi-jurisdictional drug and gang task forces, information sharing and technology, county jails, prosecutors, drug courts, and juvenile delinquency and drug treatment courts. Losing access to a percentage of this funding will undermine law enforcement's mission to keep the public safe.

Additionally, NAPO is concerned with a provision in the bill that would incentivize states (through Byrne JAG penalties) to adopt laws requiring independent investigations and prosecutions of law enforcement officers in cases where one or more of the alleged offenses involves an officer's use of deadly force in the course of carrying out his or her official duties. NAPO fears that an independent prosecutor would be under a great deal of pressure to justify his/her work. There is a risk that decisions to prosecute would be made based on politics, not on the law and admissible evidence. NAPO is concerned that an officer would be indicted, even if he/she did nothing wrong.

NAPO urges you to strongly consider our concerns with this legislation. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

William J. Johnson
Executive Director