

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

317 South Patrick Street. ~ Alexandria, Virginia ~ 22314-3501
(703) 549-0775 ~ (800) 322-NAPO ~ Fax: (703) 684-0515
www.napo.org ~ Email: info@napo.org



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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON
Executive Director

October 20, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), representing 241,000 rank-and-file police officers from across the United States, I would like to express our strong support of The Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act (S.1723). NAPO respectfully urges your vote for cloture and final passage of the bill.

Over the past 17 years, local law enforcement officers and the agencies they serve have made tremendous strides in reducing the level of crime and violence in our communities. This success was due in large part to the generous assistance and support given by the federal government through the COPS program to help hire and train new officers as well as retain experienced officers.

As state and local law enforcement take on more duties to protect our communities from rising crime and terrorist threats, federal support of this vital assistance program is critical.

During the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the COPS Office received over 7,200 applications for the \$1 billion in funds available through the COPS Hiring Recovery Program. This amount, however, aided only a fraction of the applicants leaving \$7.4 billion in unanswered hiring requests. Nearly three years have gone by since this legislation was approved. Yet, the need to fund officers is even greater. Approximately 30,000 law enforcement jobs are unfilled and 12,000 police officers and sheriffs deputies will be laid off by the end of 2011. This year could go on record for the first national decline in law enforcement officer positions in the past 25 years.

Allocations for COPS Hiring have been reduced significantly, from FY10 to FY11 the program was cut over \$51 million. The House Appropriations Committee zero-funded the COPS Hiring Program and the Senate only appropriated \$200 million before carve-outs. The Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act would allow for the hiring, rehiring or retention of officers, something greatly needed throughout our communities.

The reduction in law enforcement for 2011 is a factor for the spike in law enforcement fatalities. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 149 officers have been killed in the line of duty from January 1, 2011 to October 19, 2011. When considering the COPS Hiring program one must also take into account the safety of the thousands of rank-and-file officers who put their lives on the line.

NAPO respectfully urges you to vote in favor of The Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act (S.1723). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or NAPO's Director of Government Affairs, Rachel Hedge, at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director

cc: NAPO President, Tom Nee
U.S. Senate