



The Washington Report: Update

The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations
Representing America's Finest

November 19, 2021

President Signs Three NAPO Priority Bills Supporting Law Enforcement into Law

Yesterday, November 19, in a significant victory for NAPO, President Biden signed the Protecting America's First Responders Act (S. 1511), the COPS Counseling Act (S. 1502), and the Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Officers and Employees Protection Act (S. 921) into law. NAPO was at the White House for the bill signing ceremony.

The Protecting America's First Responders Act makes it easier for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty to qualify for the federal Public Safety Officer's Benefits (PSOB) Program's disability benefits, ensures that beneficiaries receive the highest award amount possible, and makes certain that all children of public safety officers disabled or killed in the line of duty are able to benefit from the Public Safety Officers' Education Assistance Program.

The Protecting America's First Responders Act also includes a two year extension of the COVID presumption for PSOB eligibility for public safety officers who had COVID-19 at the time of death or who are disabled due to COVID-19. The presumption will last through December 31, 2023, or until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, whichever occurs later. This bill was sponsored by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representative Bill Pascrell (D-NJ).

The COPS Counseling Act implements confidentiality standards for federal law enforcement peer support counseling programs and directs the U.S. Attorney General to report on best practices and professional standards for state and local peer support counseling programs. It is a significant step forward in ensuring that all law enforcement officers across the nation have access to confidential peer support programs. This bill was sponsored by Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Representatives David Trone (D-MD) and Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA).

The Jaime Zapata and Victor Avila Federal Law Enforcement Protection Act ensures justice is served by applying federal extra territorial jurisdiction to federal murder or attempted murder cases of federal law enforcement officers. It is a simple fix to a hole in federal law that ensures that federal law enforcement officers serving abroad receive the same protections as those serving at home. This bill was sponsored by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Chris Coons (D-DE) and Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX).

NAPO thanks all the bills' sponsors and their staff for championing these important issues and for all the efforts they made on our behalf to push these bills across the finish line.

If you have any questions about what these bills mean for you and your members, please contact NAPO's director of governmental affairs, Andy Edmiston, at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0775.