



# The Washington Report

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

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November 25, 2013

## NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

### NAPO Briefing on Capitol Hill - Driver's Privacy Protection Act & Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act

On November 18, 2013, NAPO met with **Congressman Howard Coble's (R-NC)** Legislative Director, Mr. John Mautz, to discuss our proposal to modify the recent amendment to the Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) and request support for the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act. Congressman Coble is a member of the House Judiciary Committee.

The DPPA requires state motor vehicle departments to receive permission from individuals before their personal motor vehicle record may be sold or released. The DPPA amendment authorizes a private right of action for knowing violations, and a court may award damages in the amount of \$2,500 for each time a record was accessed, as well as attorney fees and other litigation costs. Law enforcement officers are subject to these stringent punishments, even if they did not review files with criminal intent.

Mr. Mautz was very receptive to our proposed language modifications to the DPPA amendment, which include adding a clause that explains that penalties will be applied only if persons access information with the specific intent to secure an economic benefit. Also, NAPO proposes removing the \$2,500 penalty for a violation of this act, as well as adding a statement that explains there must be repeated disregard of this law for action to be taken. If the language is not modified, law enforcement officers will be subject to large fines, and even the loss of their licenses for *de minimus* actions.

NAPO also discussed the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act, (sponsored by Congressman Michael Capuano (D-MA)), with Mr. Mautz. This legislation would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 by adding campus police officers to the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. This bill would define a "campus police officer" as a police officer who is authorized to enforce the criminal laws and is employed by an institution of higher education. The change would be retroactive to April 15, 2013 - the date of the Boston bombings. NAPO has worked closely with Congressman Capuano and his staff on efforts to add cosponsors to this legislation, currently supported by the entire Massachusetts delegation, and plans to continue these efforts to ensure the passage of this important bill.

**NAPO will continue to aggressively lobby members of Congress to gain support for our proposed language changes to the DPPA amendment, as well as garner additional cosponsors to support the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act. We will keep our members updated on the status of these initiatives.**

## **NAPO Attends Community Collaboration Summit on Mental Health**

On November 19, 2013, NAPO participated in the *Connect 4 Mental Health Community Collaboration Summit*. The event provided an opportunity for stakeholders, including those in the law enforcement community, to discuss the development and collaboration of comprehensive approaches to help support individuals with serious mental illness. Mental health providers, advocates, and a variety of community stakeholders, including criminal justice and law enforcement organizations, introduced several different community-based programs and strategies aimed at helping the estimated 1 in 17 Americans living with serious mental illness, their families, and the broader communities.

**U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)**, author of the bipartisan Excellence in Mental Health Act, joined the discussion. (NAPO is a strong supporter of the Excellence in Mental Health Act, and regularly communicates with Senator Stabenow and her staff to ensure the legislation is passed). During her speech, Senator Stabenow noted the importance of providing law enforcement officers with the tools and resources they need to respond to people with mental illness.

Each of the speakers stressed that the time for greater collaboration to address serious mental illness is now. Individuals with mental illnesses are significantly overrepresented in the prison and jail population. State and local governments are increasingly finding the need for greater collaboration between criminal justice, juvenile justice, and mental health and substance abuse treatment systems to better allocate resources across systems, increase connections to needed services, and reduce recidivism.

**NAPO looks forward to continued collaboration with Senator Stabenow's staff, as well as other stakeholders, to support efforts to improve access to mental health services for people who come into contact in the criminal justice system, and to provide law enforcement officers the tools they need to identify and respond to mental health issues in the community.**

## **NAPO Attends FirstNet Hearing on Capitol Hill**

On November 21, 2013, NAPO attended a hearing held by the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications and Technology titled, "Oversight of FirstNet and the Advancement of Public Safety Wireless Communications." Testimony was heard from: Darryl Ackley, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Department of Information Technology; Stu Davis, Chief Information Officer, Assistant Director, Ohio Department of Administrative Services; Sam Ginn, Chairman, First Responder Network Authority; Dereck Orr, Program Manager, Public Safety Communications Research, Office of Law Enforcement Standards, National Institute of Standards and Technology; and David Turetsky, Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission.

During his opening statement, the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, **Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA)**, noted that Congress came together to enact the Public Safety and Spectrum Act last year, delivering one of the last remaining recommendations from the 9/11 Commission to create a nationwide interoperable public safety broadband network for first responders. To implement this mission, Congress created the First Responder Network (FirstNet).

The hearing was the second FirstNet oversight hearing in less than eight months. FirstNet Board Chairman Ginn testified on FirstNet operations and actions. He noted that FirstNet is moving in the right direction and has strengthened its operations through a talented staff. The Board continues to incorporate stakeholder & industry feedback.

**NAPO continues to support the FirstNet mission and will keep our members updated on its progress.**

## **Confirmation Hearing - DHS Nominee Jeh Johnson**

On October 18, 2013, President Obama nominated Mr. Jeh Johnson to be the next Secretary of the Department Homeland Security (DHS). Shortly after Mr. Johnson's nomination, NAPO sent a letter of support for Mr. Johnson's nomination to the Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC), **Senator Tom Carper (D-DE)**.

The Senate HSGAC approved Mr. Johnson's nomination on November 20, 2013. Members of the Senate HSGAC praised the former legal head of the Department of Defense (DoD). Chairman Carper said that Mr. Johnson was a strong leader who was ready for "the challenge that would face him." Panel ranking Republican **Tom Coburn** of Oklahoma said he looked forward to collaborating with Mr. Johnson if he is sworn in as DHS secretary.

Mr. Johnson is one of the most highly qualified and respected national security leaders. If confirmed by the full Senate, Johnson would become the fourth secretary in the Department of Homeland Security's 10-year history, and the first to have held a senior-level position in another Cabinet agency. **We are hopeful that the Senate will act swiftly in confirming Mr. Johnson for this critical position.**

## **NAPO's Top Priorities Included in the National Defense Authorization Act**

This week, amendments were filed to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2014, which support NAPO's top priorities. **Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)** filed an amendment (S. Amdt. 2133), which included the language of the National Blue Alert Act. **Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT)** filed an amendment (S. Amdt. 2471), which included the language of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program Reauthorization Act. Also, **Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MD)** filed an amendment (S. Amdt. 2484), which included the language of the Metal Theft Prevention Act.

Over the past several months, NAPO has joined fellow stakeholders in meetings with senior level Congressional staffers to request additional support for the each of the above pieces of legislation. NAPO has also attended multiple meetings with the sponsors for each of the bills to ensure we are supporting every effort necessary to pass the legislation.

**NAPO will continue to expend all available efforts to advocate for the passage of the National Blue Alert Act, the BVP Grant Program Reauthorization Act, and the Metal Theft Prevention Act. We will keep our members updated on the status of these bills.**

## **NAPO Launches New Website**

NAPO's new website has launched. Please take a moment to check out our new user friendly site at: [www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org). We are excited about the updated website, which will allow us to continue maintain strong communications and relationships with our members and sponsors.

If you have any questions or comments about the new website, please e-mail: [info@napo.org](mailto:info@napo.org).

## **Sources**

Khalid, Amrita. "Panel Endorses DHS Secretary Johnson." *Congressional Quarterly*. CQ, 20 Nov. 2013. Web. 21 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.cq.com/doc/news-4382541?wr=eFF6UIQqRXM3azBaSFdNWGhGS0RBZw>>.

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Waxman, Henry. United States. Committee on Energy and Commerce. *Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Hearing on "Oversight of FirstNet and the Advancement of Public Safety Wireless Communications" Subcommittee on Communications and Technology*. 113th Cong. Cong. Doc. Print.

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