



# The Washington Report

**The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations**

*Representing America's Finest*

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**January 21, 2014**

## **NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT**

### **NAPO Briefings on Capitol Hill - National Blue Alert Act & Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act**

Over the past week, NAPO has joined fellow stakeholders in meetings with staffers for **Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL)**, **Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)**, **Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)**, and **Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA)** to request additional support for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2013 (S.933) and the National Blue Alert Act of 2013 (S.357).

On August 1, 2013, the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced the BVP Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2013 to the Senate as a whole for consideration by a vote of 14 to 3. NAPO continues to work with fellow law enforcement organizations to garner additional cosponsors to support this legislation. The BVP Grant Program is a critical resource for state and local jurisdictions that saves lives. NAPO plans to continue to engage members of Congress to ensure the passage of this vital piece of legislation, which extends the life of the BVP Grant Program through 2018.

On September 19, 2013, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed the National Blue Alert Act of 2013 by a vote of 15 to 3. This bill would create a nationwide alert system to apprehend violent criminals who have injured or killed police officers. This bill reaffirms NAPO's commitment to ensuring the safety of our law enforcement men and women and the communities they serve to protect every day.

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

### **NAPO Attends National Criminal Justice Association Brown Bag**

NAPO attended the monthly National Criminal Justice Association Brown Bag on January 13, 2014. Senior Senate Judiciary Committee staffers for **Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT)** and **Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)** joined the meeting to discuss the Committee's agenda for the year ahead, which includes: federal prison reform, smarter sentencing, and recidivism reduction. NAPO will continue efforts to ensure our legislative priorities remain at the top of the Senate Judiciary Committee's agenda, and we will keep our members updated on the progress of our legislative initiatives.

## Omnibus Spending Bill

On January 16, 2014, Congress gave final approval to a \$1.1 trillion spending bill that eases sharp budget cuts known as the sequester and guarantees that the nation will not endure another government shutdown until at least October 1, 2014. The Senate voted 72 to 26 to approve the measure and the House overwhelmingly passed the bill.

The 2014 omnibus spending bill provides total resources in the amount of \$27.7 billion for the Department of Justice to fight crime and terrorism, protect communities and families, and provide critical grant funding for law enforcement initiatives to State, local, and tribal government.

The bill continues to show strong support for State, local, and tribal partners who fight violent crime, combat violence against women and children, and support victims of crime. State and local law enforcement need the assistance provided by Federal resources to keep communities safe, vibrant, and strong. The bill provides \$2.3 billion to help State and local law enforcement with the tools they need to fight violent crime, gangs, and terrorism. Notably, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program is funded at \$214 million in the bill. (The COPS Program was funded at \$212 million in FY 2013).

Funding for key operational grant programs is included in the bill, including \$376 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, \$417 million for Violence Against Women Act programs, \$255 million for juvenile justice and mentoring grants, and \$120 million for research and evaluation initiatives on the best prevention and intervention strategies. This funding will provide women with support to leave violent abusers; put away rapists, child abusers, and sex predators; break up child pornography and prostitution rings; build the capacity of crime laboratories to process DNA evidence and thousands of untested rape kits for use as evidence in trials; break the school to prison pipeline; and help root out and prosecute the most violent gang members.

Additionally, the bill includes \$8.2 million for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA), which is a top priority for NAPO. Funding for criminal history records and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System is also up from \$18 million in FY 2013 to \$59 million in FY 2014.

The following includes a breakdown of the Justice portion of the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill. If you have any further questions about the spending bill, please contact Melissa Nee at: [mnee@napo.org](mailto:mnee@napo.org).

|   | Fiscal 2013<br>enacted<br>appropriations | Fiscal 2014<br>Obama<br>request | House<br>committee<br>report | Senate<br>committee<br>report | Fiscal 2014<br>Omnibus |
|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Justice Department</b>                       | <b>\$27,379,996</b>                      | <b>\$28,430,539</b>             | <b>\$26,657,532</b>          | <b>\$28,502,659</b>           | <b>\$27,736,559</b>    |
| Federal Bureau of Investigation                 | 8,120,856                                | 8,442,669                       | 8,121,900                    | 8,472,669                     | 8,343,284              |
| Federal Prison System                           | 6,793,162                                | 6,939,094                       | 6,672,700                    | 6,939,094                     | 6,861,700              |
| Legal activities                                | 3,155,514                                | 3,281,195                       | 3,077,133                    | 3,284,195                     | 3,180,833              |
| United States Marshal Service                   | 2,799,825                                | 2,849,571                       | 2,684,812                    | 2,857,091                     | 2,727,800              |
| State and local law enforcement                 | 2,222,882                                | 2,421,200                       | 1,885,300                    | 2,452,800                     | 2,274,300              |
| <i>Community Oriented Policing<br/>Services</i> | <i>218,324</i>                           | <i>439,500</i>                  | <i>0</i>                     | <i>393,500</i>                | <i>214,000</i>         |
| Drug Enforcement Administration                 | 2,013,408                                | 2,067,952                       | 1,969,605                    | 2,067,952                     | 2,018,000              |
| Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,                     | 1,131,927                                | 1,229,518                       | 1,142,000                    | 1,229,518                     | 1,179,000              |

|                             | Fiscal 2013 enacted appropriations | Fiscal 2014 Obama request | House committee report | Senate committee report | Fiscal 2014 Omnibus |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Firearms and Explosives     |                                    |                           |                        |                         |                     |
| Interagency law enforcement | 511,999                            | 523,037                   | 486,000                | 523,037                 | 514,000             |

### **Sources:**

"CQ.com - CJS Appropriations, Fiscal 2014: Where the Money Goes." *CQ.com - CJS Appropriations, Fiscal 2014: Where the Money Goes*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Jan. 2014.

Mikulski, Barbara. "Summary: Fiscal Year 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Bill." *News*. Committee on Appropriations, 13 Jan. 2014. Web. 17 Jan. 2014.

Montgomery, Lori. "Senate Sends Obama a Bill to Fund the Government until October." Editorial. *Washington Post* [Washington, DC] 16 Jan. 2014: n. pag. *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 17 Jan. 2014. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.

## **Concerns Regarding COPS Funding**

Although NAPO is pleased with funding allocated for the COPS Program in the omnibus spending bill, we are concerned that the Comprehensive School Safety Program has been transferred from the COPS Office to the National Institute of Justice. Also, the Comprehensive School Safety Program is funded at \$75 million, as opposed to the President's Budget Request of \$150 million, and does not include School Resource Officers in the grant description.

NAPO has sent a letter to **Chairwoman Mikulski** informing her of these concerns and requesting the Comprehensive School Safety Program be transferred back to the COPS Office and be funded at \$150 million. The letter can be found at the following site: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/latest-news-updates/napos-letter-chairwoman-mikulski-requesting-comprehensive-school-safety-initiative-be-transferred-cops-office/>.

If you have any questions about COPS funding or NAPO's interaction with the COPS Office, please contact Melisa Nee at: [mnee@napo.org](mailto:mnee@napo.org).

## **NAPO Opposes Parole of Joseph Comfort**

On January 14, 2014, NAPO sent a letter of opposition to the parole of Joseph Comfort, who was convicted of killing New York State Police Investigator Robert VanHall, Jr. NAPO's letter of opposition can be found at the following link: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/latest-news-updates/napo-opposition-parole-joseph-comfort/>.

The information below from the President of the NYS Troopers PBA, Thomas Mungeer, provides details regarding the reasoning the parole should be denied and directions for sending a letter of opposition. **We urge your support and action to ensure that this killer remains in prison.**

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*The Troopers PBA Board of Directors is writing to ask for your support and action to ensure that a convicted felon who killed a New York State Police Investigator decades ago remains in prison. Joseph Comfort, who murdered Inv.*

***Robert L. VanHall Jr., is scheduled for a parole hearing during the week of January 27, 2014. We need your help to ensure Comfort is denied parole and kept in prison, where he belongs.***

***Investigator VanHall, who dedicated his life to serving and protecting the public, worked undercover in the war against drugs and was on duty on December 5, 1980 when he was murdered. He was shot in the back with a sawed-off, double barreled shotgun, and his aorta was severed by a deer slug. His partner was also wounded.***

***Investigator VanHall had also served two tours in the jungles of Vietnam as a Green Beret where he distinguished himself by being awarded the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars - including one with a V Device - and a Purple Heart. After all of his service and sacrifice, Investigator VanHall was senselessly gunned down on the streets of Corning serving the people of New York State.***

***The Parole Board is using an online form on its own website to accept letters of opposition. To send a letter of opposition to the Board of Parole, please visit their web site by clicking on the following link:***  
***<https://www.parole.ny.gov/boardletters/forminput.jsp>***

***After you fill out your personal information, you will see fields for "Din," "Inmate Name," and "Subject of Your Email." Here is what you will type in:***

***Din: 82C0273***

***Inmate Last Name: Comfort***

***Inmate First Name: Joseph***

***Subject of Your Email: Letter of Opposition***

***Then, in the "Comments" box, you can cut and paste the following letter:***

***I oppose the parole of Joseph Comfort, who murdered State Police Investigator Robert L VanHall, Jr. by shooting him in the back with a sawed-off, double barreled shotgun, which severed his aorta with a deer slug. Comfort has no respect for the criminal justice system or the law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line to protect the public. The tragedy of the death of a State Police Investigator, a member of the Army Green Beret and decorated Vietnam veteran, husband, father, brother and son would be compounded by the release of Comfort.***