



# The Washington Report

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

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October 8, 2013

## **NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT FLASH**

### **NAPO Continues Efforts to Pass the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act**

As has been noted in previous Washington Reports, NAPO is a strong supporter of the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC), which helps criminal justice and mental health agencies work collaboratively towards better outcomes. The JMHCPC can help law enforcement agencies across the United States in their responsibilities in assisting those, and dealing with citizens with mental health issues.

On June 20, 2013, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act (JMHCAC) of 2013 with overwhelming bipartisan support. The bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senator Al Franken (D-MN) and Congressman Richard Nugent (R-FL) in late January 2013, built upon the successes of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA), and supports law enforcement training; veterans treatment courts; resources for corrections systems; and other collaborative approaches to improve responses to people with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system.

*60 Minutes* recently illustrated the importance of passing the JMHCAC in a story which details how many of the recent mass shootings in the U.S. were preventable tragedies and symptoms of a failing mental health system. (The story can be accessed at the following link: <http://m.cbsnews.com/postwatch.rbml?pageType=video&cbsID=50156091>). The story also demonstrates the importance of providing law enforcement officers with the tools they need to respond to those individuals with mental health issues in the community.

Shortly after the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced the JMHCAC, Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Mike Lee (R-UT) placed holds on the legislation. Over the past several months, NAPO has worked with other stakeholders to urge Senators Lee and Coburn to release their holds so that the bill can proceed through the legislative process. NAPO has communicated with Senators Lee and Coburn and has been an active participant in JMHCAC working groups to strategize ways forward on the legislation.

**On September 25, 2013, NAPO continued efforts to garner additional support for the bill by requesting the following key Republican Senators co-sponsor the legislation: Lamar Alexander (R-TN), John Boozman (R-AR), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Jeff Chiesa (R-NJ), Bob Corker (R-TN), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Mark Kirk (R-IL), John McCain (R-AZ), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).**

**NAPO will continue to work closely with JMHCAC working group leadership and Senator Franken's lead staffer on this legislation to ensure the bill is passed.**

If you have any questions about this legislation, please contact Melissa Nee at: [mnee@napo.org](mailto:mnee@napo.org).

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