



The Washington Report

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

February 24, 2014

NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

TAKE ACTION: Nomination for Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division

On February 6, 2014, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 10-8 to advance Debo Adegbile's nomination to be the next Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. NAPO has consistently voiced strong opposition to Mr. Adegbile's nomination. Under Mr. Adegbile's leadership, the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People volunteered their services to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, a convicted cop-killer. Abu-Jamal was convicted of murdering Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner in 1982. Mr. Adegbile worked tirelessly to free this unrepentant cop-killer. The nominee's efforts led to the overturning of the just sentence Abu-Jamal received for murdering a valuable member of the law enforcement community.

NAPO expects the Senate to vote on this nomination during this working period. NAPO has contacted every Democratic Senator and key Republican Senators to express our strongest possible opposition to the nominee. We urge our members to write to your Senators to express opposition to the nominee. For your reference, NAPO's letter of opposition can be found at the following site: <http://www.napo.org/washington-report/latest-news-updates/napo-opposes-debo-adegbile-nomination/>. Please send a copy of your letter to Melissa Nee (mnee@napo.org) so that NAPO can ensure all of our member groups are heard.

If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org or 703-549-0774.

NAPO Participates in Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act Working Group

NAPO participated in a Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act (JMCA) Working Group meeting on February 18, 2014. The group strategized ways forward to ensure the passage of the JMCA.

The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) created the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMCA) to help states and counties design and implement collaborative efforts between criminal justice and mental health systems. The JMCA reauthorizes the successful MIOTCRA and extends the JMCA for five years. The JMCA can help law enforcement agencies across the United States in their responsibilities in assisting those, and dealing with citizens with mental health issues.

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NAPO continues to reach out to key Republican members of the House of Representatives to request they cosponsor the House version of the JMHCA, sponsored by Congressman Nugent (R-FL). The House bill is currently supported by 36 GOP cosponsors, and we are working to increase the cosponsor tally to 50 to demonstrate the strong support the bill holds. NAPO plans to join fellow stakeholders in upcoming staffer meetings to garner additional support for the bill.

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

NAPO Meetings on Capitol Hill

Over the past week, NAPO met with staffers for the following members of Congress: **Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA)**, **Congressman Steve Daines (R-MT)**, and **Congressman Lamar Smith (R-TX)**. (Congressman Smith is a member of the House Judiciary Committee). In addition to discussing the JMHCA, NAPO requested support for the following pieces of legislation:

Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program Reauthorization Act: NAPO explained the importance of the BVP Grant Program, which provides federal funds to state and local law enforcement departments to assist state and local law enforcement efforts to purchase bullet resistant vests. NAPO continues to expend all available efforts to garner additional cosponsors for the House and Senate versions of this bill.

Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act: NAPO provided background on the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act, which amends 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 defines 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. (NAPO thanked Congressman McGovern for cosponsoring the bill and highlighted our efforts to garner additional support for the legislation).

Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA): NAPO briefed the staffers on our proposed language modifications to the most recent 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. NAPO also 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.

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Improvement and Reauthorization Act: NAPO stressed the importance of passing this legislation, which would reauthorize the COPS program for five years and raise the current hiring cap from \$75,000 to \$125,000.

Finally, NAPO discussed our support of the McLelland-Hasse Line of Duty Act with Congressman Smith's staff. This legislation would create a new federal crime for the killing, attempted killing, or conspiring to kill a United States judge, federal law enforcement officer, or federally funded public safety officer. The bill would also create a new federal crime for interstate flight to avoid prosecution for killing, attempting to kill, or conspiring to kill a United States judge, federal law enforcement officer, or federally funded public safety officer. The legislation would clarify and enhance penalties for assaulting a federal official during the discharge of his or her duties. Additionally, the bill would expressly allow all judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials, subject to limited regulations, to carry firearms into all federal facilities, federal courts, and in jurisdictions where the carrying of such weapons is otherwise prohibited by law.

The staffers were receptive to the above proposals, and we look forward to working with them on these legislative priorities.

Chairman Goodlatte and Congressman Forbes Ask DOJ to Appeal Court Decision that Allows Gang Members to Stay in U.S.

On February 21, 2014, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Congressman Randy Forbes (R-VA) sent a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder asking what the Department of Justice (DOJ) plans to do in light of a recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit that endangers communities by allowing criminal gang members to receive asylum in the United States or withholding of removal by simply claiming that they have renounced their membership in the gang. In the case of *Martinez v. Holder*, the court ruled that Julio Martinez, an unlawful immigrant from El Salvador, could stay in the United States because he renounced his membership in the notoriously deadly MS-13 gang and returning to El Salvador could jeopardize his safety. This decision encourages fraud and creates a new loophole where gang members can simply claim that they are no longer a member of a gang.

The letter can be found at the following link: <http://judiciary.house.gov/cache/files/c40ba915-d436-4cef-8361-865e9a1b0a2f/attorneygeneralgangletter.pdf>. NAPO will keep our members informed of DOJ's response to this letter and future legislative actions.

Source:

"Press Release: Goodlatte & Forbes Ask DOJ to Appeal Court Decision That Allows Gang Members to Stay in U.S."
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Please monitor NAPO's website www.napo.org, and Facebook page: National Association of Police Organizations, and follow us on Twitter at NAPOpolice for breaking news and updates.