



# The Washington Report

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

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October 23, 2017

## **NAPO Letter to the Editor in Response to NYT Article**

NAPO submitted a [Letter to the Editor to The New York Times](#) in response to an article by Maggie Haberman entitled, “Bipartisan Group Plans to Urge Trump to Adjust Policing Policies”. We strongly object to the premise of the article that a group of prominent law enforcement officials and representatives, purportedly representing this nation’s law enforcement community, disagree with Attorney General Jeff Sessions’ policies on policing and plan to bring their grievances to President Trump.

Our membership, including by the way every police patrolman and woman, detective, lieutenant and captain of the City of New York, are nothing short of grateful for Attorney General Sessions’ leadership and perseverance. It has been a breath of fresh air that we finally have an Attorney General who (gasp) simply wants to enforce the law. His well-demonstrated support as a senator for the officer on the street has continued in his new position. Mr. Sessions attended our annual national TOP COPS Awards dinner during May’s National Police Week, and was interrupted at least three times by sustained, standing ovations. The groups mentioned in Ms. Haberman’s story are not at all representative of the actual working American police officer, chief or sheriff. They are those who helped push the top-down, Washington-knows-best policies of the Obama Justice Department, which was no friend of the rank-and-file officer. Our members, and this association, strongly support the Attorney General and what he is trying to accomplish.

This article distorted the facts behind the policies promoted and supported by the Attorney General and is misinformed in the belief that our nation’s law enforcement does not stand squarely with him. NAPO felt a need to respond to this article and support our Attorney General for under his direction, the Justice Department has acted to support state and local law enforcement.

The most visible efforts the Department has made in support of state and local law enforcement and in partnership with organizations like NAPO include the President’s executive order repealing restrictions on surplus military equipment, changes to federal asset forfeiture policy to make it easier for state and local agencies to participate, the creation of the Office of Law Enforcement Liaison, and support for full implementation of the National Blue Alert System. The Attorney General has also begun sending out personal condolence letters to the families of officers who have died in the line of duty. It is very evident that the Attorney General and the Department are dedicated to supporting the law enforcement community, both in words and actions.

NAPO looks forward to continuing our work with him and the Department to support the men and women who serve and protect our communities.

# **NAPO on the Hill: Asset Forfeiture and Criminal Justice Reform**

NAPO met with Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) and his staff on October 17 regarding law enforcement's concerns with the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (S. 1917), which NAPO opposes. We are not alone in our opposition – every major law enforcement organization is opposed to the bill. NAPO is working collectively with the other law enforcement organizations to fight this legislation as well as significant asset forfeiture and criminal justice reform efforts that do not reflect the needs of the law enforcement communities.

The Chairman spoke as to why he felt it was necessary to reduce mandatory minimum sentences and increase opportunities for prisoners to participate in recidivism reduction programs and prerelease custody. He believes the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act ensures that sentences better fit their crimes by targeting violent and career criminals while giving nonviolent, low risk offenders a chance to become productive members of society. While NAPO agrees that these are laudable goals – to ensure the punishment fits the crime – we disagree on how this bill accomplishes those goals.

This legislation tries to do too much at once, and consequently, would negatively impact public safety. States and localities would become the dumping ground for federal criminals due to the sentencing and correctional reforms and the bill does not contain the safeguards, support and resources that would be necessary for communities to handle the influx of parolees. As we have seen in California, while the state prison reforms have led to lower state prison populations and some savings for the state, it has resulted in increased stresses on local and county budgets and resources as those prisoners who were once wards of the state fill county jails and flood community services.

Further, NAPO continues to believe that mandatory minimums are a strong deterrent for criminals and an important tool in helping law enforcement keep our communities safe from violent crime. We have supported smart sentencing reduction in the past, including the Fair Sentencing Act of 2009, which reduced the sentencing ratio for crack and powder cocaine offenses. The important difference is that while the Smarter Sentencing Act reduced mandatory minimums, it also targeted and punished those who bring the most destruction to our neighborhoods: dealers or sellers who use violence or weapons, or cause injury to or threaten others, regardless of the form of cocaine. The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act does not provide for such safeguards.

We are open to working with the Chairman and the Committee on this bill, assuming they take our concerns seriously and work with us to address them. However, while the Chairman welcomes the input of stakeholders, it does not seem like he is interested in significantly changing the bill much further as it is the result of a long, bipartisan negotiation process.

NAPO will continue to participate in discussions around the bill and monitor its progress. We will be sure that Committee members understand our position and what our concerns are with the legislation. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **NAPO on the Hill: Senate DOJ Oversight Hearing**

On October 18, NAPO attended the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing on the Oversight of the Department of Justice at the request of the Attorney General's Office to offer a show of support for him and the law enforcement policies he is implementing at the Department. Attorney General Sessions was the main and only witness at the hearing. In his opening remarks, he spoke about the importance of supporting state and local law enforcement in their fight against violent crime with resources and funding through programs like Project Safe Neighborhood and Civil Asset Forfeiture. He went on to highlight that he has directed Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein

to hire a Director of Asset Forfeiture Accountability to review and coordinate all aspects of the program and provide another layer of answerability to the program in senior-level Department leadership.

The Attorney General also addressed the fact that there has been an erosion in respect for the rule of law and that politics have gotten in the way of enforcing our nation's laws. If there are laws that are unpopular, Congress must act to change those laws and not rely on regulations and policies to try to alter them. As Attorney General, Mr. Sessions is our nation's highest law enforcement official, and we agree with him that it is the Department's job to enforce the law, not enforce only those laws with which it agrees.

Much of the hearing was focused on the Russia investigation and past statements by Mr. Sessions regarding that investigation. Other than a few mentions of criminal justice reform, on which the Attorney General stated he is willing to work with the Committee, there was little discussion of Department policies.

NAPO will continue to stand with the Attorney General and support his leadership, under which the Department has changed course in terms of supporting state and local law enforcement and ensuring the men and women on the street have the resources and equipment they need to do their jobs efficiently and effectively.

## **FBI Releases 2016 Data on Officers Assaulted and Killed**

On October 16, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released the [2016 statistics for Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted \(LEOKA\) in the Line of Duty](#). The data shows what we have known – that 2016 was a particularly deadly year for law enforcement. According to the data, 116 law enforcement officers were killed in line-of-duty incidents in 2016. Of these, 66 officers died of felonious acts and 52 officers died in accidents.

The most disturbing data is that of the 66 felonious deaths, 17 were killed in ambushes and 3 were victims of unprovoked attacks. This is a 61 percent increase over the number of officers killed as a result of a criminal act in 2015. The 5- and 10-year comparisons show a 35% increase compared to the 2012 figures and a 14% increase compared with 2007. Not only has there been a long-term increase in the number of criminal killings of law enforcement officers, it is plainly evident that it is currently a very dangerous time to be an officer.

The data further breaks down how the officers were killed. 62 of the 66 officers were killed with firearms and the remaining 4 officers were killed with vehicles used as weapons. As policy makers argue that the standards for the use of force should be changed, they must look at this data on officer fatality and understand what the men and women in uniform on the street are facing. Officers are being killed simply for being an officer and face deadly circumstances when they respond calls.

Added to that, the FBI also collected assault data in 2016 from 12,421 law enforcement agencies that employed over 586,446 officers. Of these, 57,180 officers were assaulted in the line-of-duty, a majority of whom were assaulted by an assailant's "personal weapons" (hands, fists, feet, etc.). 22 percent of the total assaults were with firearms, knives or other dangerous weapons.

It is a very perilous time to be an officer and NAPO is fighting to establish stricter penalties for those who assault, attempt to kill or kill a law enforcement officer. Any persons contemplating harming an officer must know that they will face serious punishments. NAPO strongly believes that increased penalties make important differences in the attitudes of criminals toward public safety officers, and ensure protection for the community.

NAPO is pushing for the enactment of several pieces of legislation that would increase penalties for those who harm or target for harm law enforcement officers, including the Thin Blue Line Act (H.R. 115 / S. 1085) and the Back the

Blue Act (H.R. 2437 / S. 1134). We are also working with the Department of Justice on developing possible legislation to address the issue of officer assaults and killings through increased federal penalties.

If you have any questions about the 2016 LEOKA data or NAPO's efforts to establish harsher penalties for violent crimes against officers, please contact Andy Edmiston at [aedmiston@napo.org](mailto:aedmiston@napo.org).

## **PLEASE HELP OUR BROTHER AND SISTER OFFICERS AFFECTED BY HURRICANES HARVEY & IRMA**

*Thank you to all our member groups, individual members, supporters and sponsors  
who have already donated to NAPO's Relief Fund!*

The requests for relief checks are flowing in. Many, many officers in Texas and South Florida have lost everything due to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Attached please find a [donation form](#) that you can fill in and submit. Several of our groups have reposted it to their own members and we ask that other groups please do the same. The form is also up on our Facebook site and webpage ([www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org)) and we have a direct donations link for our Relief Fund up and running on our website.

Here is the link to make donations: <http://www.napo.org/about/how-support-law-enforcement/napo-relief-fund-hurricane-harvey-assistance/>

We will repeat our requests for contributions to our Relief Fund as long as needed.

100 percent of donations will be used to provide direct financial relief to the officers affected. We will rely on the local unions and associations to confirm the damage and losses and will immediately cut checks to the officers.

Thank you for your support and generosity for all our brother and sister officers and their families affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.



Michael "Mick" McHale, President



Bill Johnson, Executive Director

**Please monitor NAPO's website, [www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org), and Facebook page: National Association of Police Organizations, and follow us on Twitter at NAPOpolice for breaking news and updates.**