



The Washington Report

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

March 24, 2023

Register Today for NAPO's 2023 Lobby Day Legislative Breakfast & Legislative Awards Luncheon

Don't miss out on the opportunity to join NAPO on Thursday, May 11 for our Lobby Day & Legislative Awards Luncheon on Capitol Hill. This is a great opportunity to lobby Congressional Representatives and Senators on behalf of your members concerning the issues which affect law enforcement. Prior to lobbying Capitol Hill, plan to attend NAPO's Legislative Breakfast for an update on NAPO's legislative priorities, results to date from the 118th Congress and to receive handouts to use during Hill visits.

While on Capitol Hill be sure to stop by NAPO's Legislative Awards Luncheon, which is back after a three year hiatus, where several Representatives, Senators, and their staff will be recognized for their continued support of Law Enforcement.

Please Register [online](#) or complete the attached registration form and return to NAPO at aedmiston@napo.org or eloranger@napo.org by MAY 1, 2023.

For assistance in setting up Capitol Hill appointments, please contact Andy Edmiston, NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, no later than May 1st at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0774.

The registration fee of \$150.00 per person includes the Legislative Update Breakfast, handouts for your Congressional visits and the Legislative Awards Luncheon. **Advanced Registration is required.** Please contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, at (800) 322-6278 or eloranger@napo.org if you have any questions regarding registration or hotel arrangements.

President Biden's FY 2024 Budget Proposal

President Biden has released his proposed budget request for Fiscal Year 2024. In general, the President's budget proposal for the DOJ is very similar to his FY 2023 request and focuses on supporting police and criminal justice reform initiatives. It proposes adequate sustained funding for several of NAPO's priority grant programs, including the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program, the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP), also known as the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act and Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act programs. It also includes a significant funding increase for the Community

Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program, most of which is prioritized for the President's anti-violence and police reform priorities.

The President's budget requests \$542.6 million for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program, which is \$228 million less than the program received in FY 23. There are \$187 million in carve outs for several law enforcement and criminal justice related grants drawn from Byrne JAG funding. Rather than making these grants standalone programs, their funding is taken out of the funding for the larger Byrne JAG program. The programs funded through Byrne JAG include \$13 million for the Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Program, \$40 million for Project Safe Neighborhoods, and \$20 million for a proposed new grant program to provide law enforcement training on racial profiling, de-escalation and duty to intervene.

For the COPS Program, the President's budget proposes \$651 million. It allocates \$537 million of that for the COPS Hiring Program, out of which \$8 million would go towards the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act and Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act programs. It also carves \$20 million for the Collaborative Reform Program, which provides technical assistance and training for departments to help them address systemic issues. After all the other programs are funded, \$388 million is left for the Hiring Program.

In his budget, the President is recommending a significant increase in funding for certain community policing initiatives and directing that funding to supporting police reform policies and practices. For example, the budget would add new conditions and priority preferences for the COPS Hiring Program to focus grant funding to agencies that partner with community organizations to implement community violence intervention (CVI) strategies, which aim to reduce gun violence through tools other than incarceration, and want to hire officers to dedicate to those strategies. It also prioritizes for funding those jurisdictions that want to implement hiring practices to help law enforcement agencies "mirror the racial diversity of the communities they serve". Further, and perhaps most important to note, the President's proposed budget would implement new priority preferences to incentivize agencies to implement the reforms laid out in his police reform Executive Order.

The budget requested funding levels for NAPO's other priority grant programs:

- Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program: \$30 million
- Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP): \$40 million
- Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Body-Worn Camera Grant Program: \$35 million
- COPS Anti-Meth Task Force Program: \$15 million
- COPS Anti-Heroin Task Force Program: \$35 million
- POLICE Act (active shooter training): \$11 million
- STOP School Violence Act Grants: \$135 million

For the important DHS grants, the budget proposal requests approximately \$601.2 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), \$711.2 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), and \$100 million for port security grants.

The President's Fiscal 2024 Budget represents the President's fiscal priorities, but it is Congress that decides the final appropriations for FY 2024. NAPO is working with Congress to ensure our priority grant programs receive robust funding, while maintaining local discretion on how these funds can best be used to meeting the needs of communities. We continue to work with the Administration to ensure they understand the importance of these programs, and the flexibility that comes with them, to ensuring state and local law enforcement have the resources and equipment they need to effectively serve and protect our communities.

NAPO Supports Bill Covering Exposure-Related Cancers Under PSOB Program

NAPO pledged its support for the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act (S. 930 / H.R. 1719), introduced by Representatives Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Carlos Giménez (R-FL), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA) in the House and Senators Amy Klobuchar and Kevin Cramer (R-ND) in the Senate. This important bill will cover exposure-related cancers under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program for death and disability benefits.

Our nation's public safety officers put their lives at risk every day. Sometimes unnoticed are the officers pulling families from burning cars or saving children from house fires or those responding to chemical fires or train wrecks like the one in East Palestine, Ohio. These acts of heroism often have long-term consequences for the officers, including exposure-related cancers. The Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act recognizes these as line-of-duty injuries under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program and ensures that officers suffering from these cancers and their families get the benefits they have earned.

The bill would also make a technical correction to the PSOB's COVID presumption to change the term "line of duty action" to include any action in which a public safety officer engages at the direction of their agency. The PSOB Program has apparently been denying or delaying COVID-related death and disability claims for officers who caught COVID while performing duties outside of those of a "law enforcement officer", "fire fighter", or "EMT", as defined by the program, even though those duties were done at the direction of their agency. This bill will fix that issue. The COVID presumption under the PSOB Program ends on December 31, 2023.

On March 6, 2023, President Joe Biden endorsed the Honor Act and called on Congress to get the bill to his desk. NAPO thanks Representatives Pascrell, Gimenez, Fitzpatrick, and Scanlon and Senators Klobuchar and Cramer for championing this bill and we look forward to working with them to get this bill to the President to be signed into law.

NAPO-Backed Public Safety Officer Concussion & TBI Health Act Introduced

NAPO worked closely with Senator John Cornyn's (R-TX) staff to develop the Public Safety Concussions and Traumatic Brain Injury Health Act (S. 894), which the Senator introduced with Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV). With the riots that have occurred over the past few years and the increase in physical attacks on law enforcement officers, NAPO feels it is vital that the impacts of concussions and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) be studied and best practices be disseminated to public safety agencies, officers and their families, and medical personnel to help recognize, prevent, and treat such injuries in officers.

Traumatic brain injuries are any type of jolt that results in a change to brain function. These injuries can lead to serious issues, including difficulties with memory, concentration, and communication. Concussions are considered a mild TBI, which is usually temporary but can take months to heal.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains a website regarding TBIs under their injury prevention and control division. As part of this website, the agency provides data on TBIs, where to get help, research and reports, and specific resources for health care providers. The Public Safety Concussions and TBI Health Act would require the CDC to collect and make publicly available information

on traumatic brain injuries specifically for public safety officers and provide recommendations and protocols for identifying, treating, and diagnosing concussions. It would also have the CDC disseminate information to mental health professionals on the connection between concussions and traumatic brain injuries with acute stress disorders and suicidal inclinations.

Senators Mike Braun (R-IN), Bob Casey (D-PA), and Chris Coons (D-DE) are original cosponsors of the bill and we thank them and Senators Cornyn and Cortez Masto for working with us on this important bill and championing the mental health and wellness of public safety officers.

NAPO Participates in Stakeholder Meeting on Implementation of Police Reform Executive Order

On March 14, NAPO participated in a second stakeholder meeting with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which serves as the chief human resources agency and personnel policy manager for the federal government, and other national federal, state and local law enforcement representatives to discuss Section 3 of the President's Executive Order on police reform. Section 3 covers officer recruitment, hiring, promotions and retention.

The objective of this meeting was for OPM to consult with law enforcement stakeholders to assess existing policies and identify and share best practices in order to outline the steps needed to achieve the identified goals of Section 3 of the Executive Order: (1) recruitment and hiring; (2) promotion and retention; (3) assessment of the officer's adherence to agency policies during performance evaluations and promotion decisions; and (4) conducting background investigations and implementing properly validated selection procedures.

The meeting included a discussion around officer training as it relates to promotions. We made the point that training must be continual and used to assist officers to achieve positive assessments. It is also important that management discuss with the rank-and-file about their needs and what would be most helpful in terms of attaining promotion.

Currently, OMB is looking to establish standards and best practices under Section 3 for federal law enforcement officers per the Executive Order, but it is more likely than not that these best practices will be forced onto state and local law enforcement agencies in some manner. There will be at least one more stakeholder discussion on Section 3 and we look forward to our continued participation in the implementation of this section and the rest of the Executive Order.

COPS Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Grant Now Open for Applications

The Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has announced that it is now accepting application for the fiscal year [2023 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act \(LEMHWA\) program](#). NAPO worked hard to enact the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act in 2018 and has been working to increase funding for this important program every fiscal year since. Congress funded it at \$2 million the first year and then \$4 million and today the program is funded at \$8 million.

The Fiscal Year 2023 LEMHWA Program funds are used to improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement through the implementation of peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs. The FY23 LEMHWA program will fund projects that develop knowledge, increase awareness of effective mental health and wellness strategies, increase the skills and abilities of law enforcement, and increase the number of law enforcement agencies and relevant stakeholders using peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs.

The FY23 LEMHWA program has two open solicitations:

- LEMHWA Implementation Projects: aims to support state, local, tribal, or territorial law enforcement agencies seeking to implement new or enhance existing programs that offer training and services on officer emotional and mental health, peer mentoring, suicide prevention, stress reduction, and support services for officers and their families Proposed projects may serve one agency, a consortium of agencies, or personnel from agencies located within a county or state.
- LEMHWA National Level Resources, Training, and Technical Assistance: aims to develop resources such as toolkits and publications; offer training; and provide assistance to state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies across the country to implement successful mental health and wellness initiatives for officers and their families.

Applicants may apply for both subcategories, but a separate application is required for each program. Visit the [grant page](#) for more information about applying and closing dates.

Emergency COPS Hiring Supplemental Funding Bill Introduced

NAPO endorsed the Filling Public Safety Vacancies Act, introduced by Senators Jon Ossoff (D-GA) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), which is an emergency supplemental bill that would provide an additional \$162 million for the COPS Hiring Program immediately upon being signed into law. The bill would require agencies using this funding to do background checks and psychological evaluations on officer candidates and the funding can be used to cover the costs of these requirements.

Across the country, police departments are fighting to contain the increased violent crime our communities are facing, but they are understaffed, under-resourced, and struggling to hire and retain good, qualified officers. In introducing the Filling Public Safety Vacancies Act, Senators Ossoff and Blackburn recognize the vital importance of the COPS Hiring Program, which provides invaluable assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies for the hiring and rehiring of qualified officers. This legislation will immediately inject much needed resources to state and local law enforcement agencies to help them hire and rehire thoroughly vetted officers and keep our communities safe.

Legislation to Increase Penalties for Attacks Against Officers Introduced

Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Congressman Mike Garcia (R-CA) reintroduced the Defending the Defenders Act (S. 868 / H.R. 1627), which would make the murder of a state or local law enforcement officer a federal crime punishable by life in prison or the death penalty.

This bill is critical, as there is a serious and growing trend of armed attacks on law enforcement officers. According to a May 2022 report from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), 346 officers were shot in the line of duty in 2021, of which 64 officers died from their injuries and 287 survived. 133 of those officers were shot and 32 died in ambushes or premeditated, calculated assaults.

NAPO has long been fighting to establish stricter penalties for those who harm law enforcement officers. Any persons contemplating harming an officer must know that they will face serious punishments. The increased penalties provided under this bill will make important differences in the attitudes of criminals toward public safety officers and ensure protection for the community.

NAPO thanks Senator Cotton and Congressman Garcia for standing up for law enforcement and speaking out on the need for this legislation. We continue to press Congress to pass increased penalties for violence against officers through legislation like the Defending Our Defenders Act.

NAPO Pushes for Support of Significant Funding for COPS Hiring Program, Byrne JAG and JMHCP

It is appropriations season on the Hill and all members of Congress have to get their spending priorities in to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees within the next two weeks in order for them to be considered as part of the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations acts. Every year, NAPO works with our champions in Congress to solicit support from members for our priority grant programs.

Representatives Bobby Scott (D-VA), Don Bacon (R-NE), and Norma Torres (D-CA) led a "Dear Colleague" letter in support full funding for the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP). The JMHCP supports crisis intervention teams and co-responder models; supports state and local efforts to identify people with mental health conditions at each point in the criminal justice system in order to appropriately direct them to mental health services; and supports the development of curricula and training for police academies.

Representatives John Rutherford (R-FL) and Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), co-chairs of the House Law Enforcement Caucus, led a letter requesting the highest possible funding for the COPS Hiring Program and the Byrne JAG program. The COPS Hiring Program provides invaluable assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies for the hiring and rehiring of qualified officers. Further, in the fight against the rise in violent crime, the Byrne JAG program has proven essential as it is the only comprehensive federal crime-fighting program that allows for a system-wide approach that enables communities to target resources to their most pressing local needs.

Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) is leading a "Dear Colleague" urging significant funding for the COPS Program, while Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) are leading the charge in support of funding for the Byrne JAG program.

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) is championing full funding for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Program, which provides matching grants to help fund state and local law enforcement efforts to purchase bullet resistant vests for their officers.

NAPO is amplifying these letters by reaching out to every Member of Congress and the Senate asking them to sign on to them in support of our top grant programs.