



The Washington Report

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

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Social Security Administration Releases FAQ on H.R. 82

The Social Security Administration (SAA) posted on its website a [detailed update and frequently asked questions](#) (FAQ) on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), including what it does, who it impacts, and what retirees can expect. You can find the FAQ here: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>.

We would like to highlight the last question of the FAQ, “[What challenges does SSA face implementing the Social Security Fairness Act?](#)”. As the SSA lays out all the obstacles in the way to quick implementation, the bottom line is that it may take up to a year to adjust benefits and pay all the retroactive benefits to those who were impacted by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Some retirees who were just impacted by WEP may get their benefits restored sooner than others. The SSA has said that it may need to go case by case for those impacted by the GPO as that is not just a change in the benefit calculation.

The SSA encourages those survivors who did not apply for survivor benefits because the GPO would have wiped them out to apply for the benefits now at www.ssa.gov so that they are in the system to receive benefits with the repeal of the GPO.

The implementation may roll out unevenly, but NAPO is working with the SSA to ensure that every public sector retiree impacted by these provisions is made whole and we will work with Congressional appropriators to fund the SSA specifically for implementation of the Social Security Fairness Act.

Be sure to follow NAPO for the latest updates on the implementation of H.R. 82.

Senate Judiciary Committee Advances Pam Bondi's Nomination to be U.S. Attorney General

On January 29, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted along party lines (12-10) to approve Pam Bondi's nomination to be the next Attorney General of the United States. The next step is for the Senate to vote on her confirmation.

NAPO is proud to have supported Attorney General Bondi during the nomination process. Throughout her career as a prosecutor in Florida and then as the state's first female Attorney General, Ms. Bondi developed close relationships with state and local law enforcement and a deep understanding of what it takes to keep our communities safe. Her close work with the Florida Police Benevolent Association, a NAPO member

organization, helped ensure Florida's law enforcement officers had the support and resources necessary to efficiently and effectively serve and protect our communities.

With her strong belief in the rule of law and her work on eradicating violent crime and illicit drugs from our communities, we know Ms. Bondi will be a true partner to state and local law enforcement and will serve our nation well as Attorney General. We look forward to working with her to promote the policy priorities of our nation's rank-and-file officers.

NAPO Attends Signing of Laken Riley Act



NAPO Director of Governmental Affairs Andy Edmiston attended the official bill signing ceremony for the Laken Riley Act at the White House on January 29. This Act would mandate that illegal immigrants arrested for the assault of a law enforcement officer, any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury to another person, burglary, theft, larceny, or shoplifting be detained for deportation by the Department of Homeland Security and it authorizes state attorneys general to sue the federal government for alleged failures of immigration enforcement.

The Act is named after Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student from Georgia who was brutally murdered while out on a run the morning of February 22, 2024. Her killer is an illegal immigrant who was initially detained by Customs and Border Protection officers along the southern border and then paroled and released for further processing. He was then allegedly arrested in New York City, once again being released, before heading to Georgia, where he assaulted and killed Ms. Riley.

This tragic case illustrates one of the biggest issues of our nation's immigration enforcement system that the Laken Riley Act will help fix.

This is the second bill signing NAPO has attended within weeks, the first under the Biden Administration for the Social Security Fairness Act, and then yesterday with the Trump Administration for the Laken Riley Act. NAPO is recognized by both Democrats and Republicans for our significant work to advance federal legislation and policies that benefit both law enforcement officers and the citizens we are sworn to protect. We appreciate the invitation to participate in these important events and look forward to working with the Administration to have many of our priority bills signed into law by President Trump.

NAPO Endorses Kash Patel for FBI Director

The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on Kash Patel, President Trump's nominee to be the next Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), on January 30. NAPO supports Mr. Patel's nomination as we believe his distinguished career in public service gives him a unique perspective that will only benefit him as FBI Director. From being a public defender to a federal prosecutor to his extensive experience in the realm of counterintelligence, he intimately understands the various aspects of the FBI's broad mission to keep our nation safe.

Throughout his career, Mr. Patel has a proven history of working well with all different components of law enforcement, specifically, from our point of view, with state and local law enforcement agencies and

officers. In a conversation with NAPO's leadership, he indicated his commitment to repairing and maintaining an excellent and open line of communication, which will be vital to ensuring that federal, state, and local law enforcement have a strong partnership and work together effectively.

NAPO sent **a letter endorsing Mr. Patel** to the Senate Judiciary Committee, urging Committee members to join us in supporting his nomination.

NAPO Highlights Tax Priorities as Congress Looks to Extend 2017 Tax Cuts

As House and Senate Republican leadership and lawmakers begin consideration of what could be included in the tax reconciliation package to extend and expand the 2017 tax cuts, NAPO sent **a letter** to Senate Finance Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-ID) and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO), two main players in the tax debate, outlining our tax-related priorities. These provisions impact the financial security of our nation's law enforcement officers.

Making Overtime Pay Tax-Free

NAPO supports President Trump's campaign proposal to make overtime pay tax-free. Our nation's law enforcement agencies are understaffed, and officers are being forced to work overtime to ensure our communities are being served. Excluding overtime pay from their taxable income would significantly help with the retention crisis facing the profession and provide financial relief to officers and their families. Overtime should be considered as any hours worked over 40 hours per seven day pay period, or the equivalent to ensure that officers are earning the overtime benefits they deserve.

Elimination or Significant Reform of the SALT Deduction Cap

We have opposed the cap on the state and local tax (SALT) deduction since it was instituted in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The SALT deduction helped ensure that state and local first responders receive the support they need from the communities they serve, as public safety budgets across the country are largely drawn from state and local property, sales, and income taxes. These investments give our first responders the tools they need to keep our communities safe.

The SALT cap also imposed a significant tax increase that many homeowners have struggled under over the past several years. Repealing the cap would be a win for homeowners, our communities, and for the first responders who work every day to keep those communities safe.

Reinstating Deductions for Public Safety Work-Related Out-of-Pocket Expenses

In most law enforcement agencies across the country, the department provides officers with uniforms, badges, hats, jackets, rain gear, and most pins. The officers themselves are responsible for their uniform maintenance and replacement, and sometimes they must purchase their service weapons, ammunition, pay for training at a gun range and buy a gun safe to store the service weapon. Officers may be given an equipment allowance in their paycheck but that does not cover the expense of purchasing this necessary gear. Excluding job-related out-of-pocket expenses by first responders and law enforcement officers from their taxable income would provide necessary financial relief to officers.

On top of those costs, many officers pay union dues, which can run around \$2,000 per year – more than an average public sector union as public safety unions provide expensive legal and liability coverage for officers, in addition to death benefits for families of officers killed in the line of duty.

It is important for law enforcement officers to be able to offset these substantial costs by deducting them from their taxable income. This will relieve an unfair financial burden that has been placed on officers, who give up so much to protect and serve our communities.

Increasing the HELPS Retirees Benefit

The Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Safety (HELPS) Retirees provision of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 provides public safety officers, who often retire earlier than other occupations because of the physical demands and unique job hazards they face, with means to more affordable healthcare options. Unfortunately, health care costs have gone up dramatically since 2006 and the \$3,000 per year permitted to be utilized from the retiree's pension under the provision is no longer adequate to cover even half a year's worth of health insurance premiums.

We support increasing the HELPS Retirees benefit from the current \$3,000 per year to \$6,000. Enhancing this important provision will help preserve the retirement security and the health of those public servants who selflessly serve and protect our communities.

Creating a Tax Credit for Retailers Who Sell Firearms Storage Devices

Gun safe storage devices are a part of the larger public safety narrative and have been shown to reduce the incidents of firearm theft, unintentionally shootings, and youth suicides. A recent study has shown that safe gun storage would reduce youth gun-related deaths by 32 percent. Using a market-based approach can help firearms retailers play a larger role in promoting responsible gun storage and increase the sale of these important devices to gun owners.

NAPO supports the creation of a new tax credit for retailers to incentivize the sale of safe storage devices for firearms. The tax credit would be equal to 10 percent of the sale price (no more than \$400 per device).

Additional Considerations

In addition to the provisions outlined above that we urge you to include in the tax package you are considering, we are concerned that proposals that would harm the financial security of public safety officers are being considered as possible revenue raisers. Specifically, we oppose the imposition of the unrelated business income tax (UBIT) on state and local governmental pension plans, which was considered as an offset for the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

The UBIT would represent a significant new tax on certain public pension plan investment earnings and would seriously diminish overall investment returns which are used to pay benefits to the hard-working first responders who dedicated their lives to protecting our nation's communities. Investment earnings pay for approximately two-thirds of state and local government pension benefits, which are taxed when distributed to participants across virtually every state, city, and town in the United States.

Subjecting public plans to UBIT would not only result in diminished investment returns, but it would also set a dangerous precedent for taxation of state entities and would ultimately increase costs to taxpayers as states and localities must make up for the funding shortfalls caused by the tax.

NAPO looks forward to working with the Committees and Congressional leadership as they consider the tax priorities of our nation's rank-and-file law enforcement as part of the larger tax package negotiation process.

NAPO Priority Legislation to Enhance Protections for Officers Reintroduced

Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) reintroduced two of NAPO's priority legislation, the Protect and Serve Act (S. 167) and the Justice for Fallen Law Enforcement Act (S. 166).

The **Protect & Serve Act** would add new federal criminal provisions to address the assault, attempted killing, or killing of law enforcement officers, giving federal prosecutors the tools they need to hold accountable those who target law enforcement for assault and attacks. The Protect and Serve Act would support law enforcement officers by:

- Making it a federal crime to knowingly cause, or attempt to cause, bodily injury to a law enforcement officer. Offenders are subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years.
- An offender could receive a life sentence if a death results from the offense, or the offense includes kidnapping, attempted kidnapping, or attempted murder.

The **Justice for Fallen Law Enforcement Act** would create a criminal penalty for the murder of a federal, state, and local enforcement officer of life imprisonment or the death penalty. In addition, it would create a criminal penalty for assault resulting in serious injury to a federal, state, and local law enforcement officer of 20 years in prison.

The attack on officers in San Antonio, Texas on January 22, during which seven officers were shot as they responded to a call for help, once again highlights the dangerous profession law enforcement officers have and the risks they face when serving and protecting their communities. The shooting of those seven brave officers is just adding to the ever-increasing number of officers being shot in the line of duty.

NAPO is calling on Congress to take up and pass the Protect and Serve Act and the Justice for Fallen Law Enforcement Act to demonstrate that the killing or the attempted killing of our nation's law enforcement officers is unacceptable and those who commit these heinous crimes must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. We thank Senator Tillis for his longstanding commitment to and support for the law enforcement community.

NAPO Priority Bill to Cover Cancers Under PSOB Reintroduced

Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Kevin Cramer (R-ND) reintroduced the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act, which recognizes exposure-related cancers as line of duty injuries and would cover them under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program for death and disability benefits. This bill has been a top priority for NAPO.

The Workers Compensation Institute conducted a study on exposure-related cancer among public safety officers which showed that public safety officers have a significantly increased chance of contracting bladder cancer, mesothelioma, melanoma, prostate cancer, and colon cancer.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program was designed to offer peace of mind to men and women seeking careers in public safety and to make a strong statement about the value that American Society places on the contributions of those who serve their communities in potentially dangerous

circumstances. To truly fulfill this intent, it is vital the PSOB Program recognizes all injuries sustained in the line of duty, including exposure-related cancers.

Currently, the only exposure-related cancers covered under the PSOB Program are 9/11-related cancers certified by the World Trade Center Health Program. The Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act would ensure equal treatment of exposure-related cancers under the PSOB Program whether they are from responding to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a chemical explosion in a meth lab, a car fire, or other duty-related exposures.

We stand with Senators Klobuchar and Cramer in support of this bill and thank them for championing this important issue.

Key Bill to Aid in the Fight Against Fentanyl Reintroduced

Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Congressman Morgan Griffith (R-VA) reintroduced the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of (HALT) Fentanyl Act, which would make permanent the current classwide scheduling of all fentanyl-related substances as Schedule 1 drugs under the Controlled Substances Act, giving law enforcement the tools and resources necessary to combat and deter fentanyl in our nation's communities.

The spread of fentanyl in our communities is devastating. It is being mixed with already deadly illicit drugs, hidden in counterfeit drugs, and being peddled at alarmingly high rates. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than 107,941 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2022 and synthetic opioids like fentanyl were involved in over 73,8381 of those deaths. The trend of deaths due to synthetic opioids and fentanyl continues to climb, with no abatement in sight.

NAPO has long fought for resources to support law enforcement's efforts to combat fentanyl, its analogues, and similar opioids and the permanent scheduling of fentanyl-related substances as Schedule 1 drugs is essential to those efforts.

In addition to sending up [our letter of support](#) for the HALT Fentanyl Act, we also joined nine national law enforcement organizations in [a letter of support](#) to House Leadership as the House is expected to vote on this important bill as soon as next week.

We thank Senator Cassidy and Congressman Griffith for their efforts to help the fight against the spread of this deadly poison in our communities and look forward to working with them to pass this critical piece of legislation.

Additional NAPO-Backed Bills Reintroduced

As the 119th Congress gets underway, legislation NAPO supported in the 118th Congress continues to be reintroduced, including the Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues (SOFA) Act, Import Security and Fairness Act, Protecting Law Enforcement from Secondary Exposure Act, and the Prosecutors Need to Prosecute Act.

Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues (SOFA) Act. This bill, introduced by Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), would permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I under the Controlled

Substances Act and codify Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) regulation that is effectively preventing new fentanyl-related substances from entering our communities.

Import Security and Fairness Act. Congressmen Tom Suozzi (D-NY) and Neal Dunn (R-FL) introduced this legislation, which would block all Chinese goods from being eligible under the *de minimis* trade loophole and would require additional data be collected on the packages that are being shipped through *de minimis*. Chinese goods represent roughly 60 percent of all *de minimis* shipments. The Import Security and Fairness Act would substantially reform *de minimis*, and by doing so, remove significant fentanyl trafficking routes into this country.

Protecting Law Enforcement from Secondary Exposure Act. This bill, introduced by Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Representatives David Joyce (R-OH) and Madeleine Dean (D-PA), would use existing Justice Department grant funds to help state and local governments purchase containment devices and provide additional training to reduce first responders' risk of secondary exposure to lethal substances in the line of duty.

Prosecutors Need to Prosecute Act. Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY) sponsors this bill, which would require any district attorneys' and prosecutors' offices that receive federal funding through the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program to report annually the number of cases they decline to prosecute, the number of crimes that are committed by repeat offenders, and the number of criminals released. The collection of this data would make prosecutorial decision making more transparent and accountable, ensuring the safety of our communities and our officers.

NAPO's Legislative Positions for the 119th Congress Updates

NAPO's latest "[Legislative Positions](#)" document for the 119th Congress is now available on the NAPO website. NAPO's Legislative Positions is a document that highlights all the legislation that we have taken an official position on or are monitoring during the 119th Congress. It is continually updated to reflect the work we are doing on Capitol Hill.

As we work to garner more cosponsors for our priority legislation, we will post a Sponsor/Cosponsor spreadsheet on our website so you can track if your members of Congress support bills that will impact our members. NAPO will update this spreadsheet regularly and continue to ensure our voice is heard on Capitol Hill.

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