

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of
POLICE ORGANIZATIONS

119th Congress

2025-2027

Legislative Priorities

National Association of Police Organizations

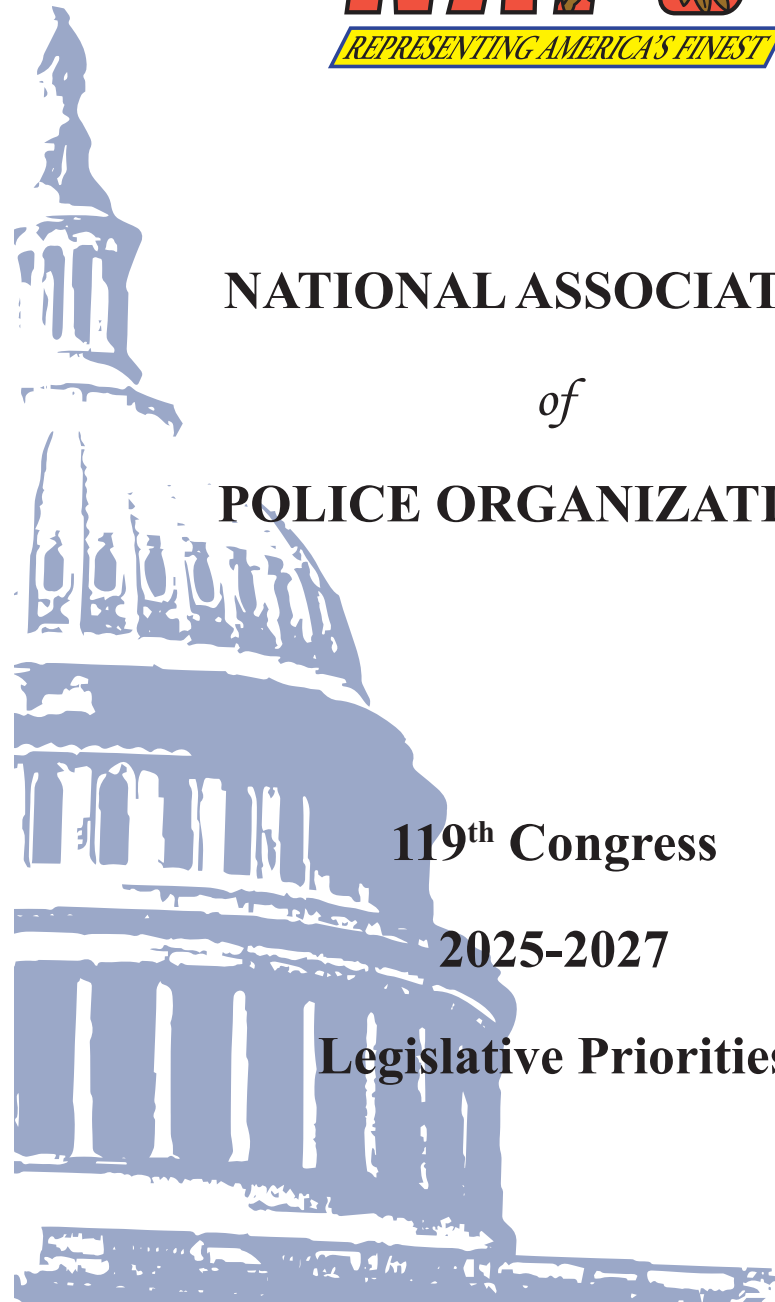
317 South Patrick Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: (703) 549-0775 ~ Fax: (703) 684-0515

www.napo.org ~ info@napo.org

Facebook & Truth Social: National Association of Police Organizations

X & Instagram: @NAPOpolice



MISSION STATEMENT

The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) was established to unite all law enforcement organizations within the United States in order to promote and maintain federal legislation and policies most beneficial to law enforcement in general and the citizens we are sworn to protect.

It is the aim of NAPO to stimulate mutual cooperation between law enforcement organizations and to assist in the economic, social, and professional advancement of all law enforcement officers, whether active or retired.

It is the further aim of NAPO to educate the public concerning the methods and means of achieving more effective crime control and law enforcement so as to establish a more peaceful, tranquil, and free society for all.

NAPO disseminates information to all member organizations and to the public regarding federal legislation and related matters which affect the interest and welfare of its member organizations, the law enforcement profession, and the public.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NAPO Facts	1
Rights of Law Enforcement Officers	
• Public Safety Collective Bargaining	8
• State and Local Law Enforcement Bill of Rights	9
State & Local Law Enforcement Assistance Programs	
• COPS Program & Byrne JAG	12
• Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness	14
• 9/11 World Trade Center Health Program	16
Retirement Security	
• Mandatory Social Security Participation	18
• Expansion of HELPS Retirees Act	21
Criminal Justice	
• Increased Penalties for Crimes Against Officers	22
• Mental Health Treatment for Offenders & Training for Law Enforcement	23
• Police Reform	24
• LEOSA Reform	26
• Immigration and Border Security	27
• Extradition of Cop-Killers	28
Public Safety Officers' Benefits	
• Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB)	30
Additional Issues of Interest	
• Federal Consent Decrees	32
• Department of Defense Equipment for State & Local Law Enforcement Agencies	33
• Postal Police Officers' Duties & Federal Law Enforcement Equity	34

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS

NAPO History: The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) is a coalition of police units and associations from across the United States. NAPO was organized for the purpose of advancing the interests of America's law enforcement officers through legislative advocacy, political action, and education.

Founded in 1978, NAPO is the strongest unified voice supporting law enforcement officers in the United States. NAPO represents more than 1,000 police units and associations and over 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

Increasingly, the rights and interests of law enforcement officers—*America's Finest* - have been the subject of legislative, executive, and judicial action in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. From issues of federal funding of state and local law enforcement and anti-crime efforts to federal policy on employee health, pensions, and other benefits, the actions of Congress and the Administration significantly impact public safety interests. These interests must be vigorously protected in light of the vital role law enforcement officers play in maintaining the peace and security of American society.

NAPO Government Affairs: NAPO maintains a Washington office to monitor and guide legislative and administrative developments. The Washington office provides information to NAPO's membership on a timely basis so that it can respond from the grassroots level. The *Washington Report*, which provides updates on current issues in which NAPO is engaged, is routinely distributed to the membership.

NAPO has achieved a number of solid legislative and administrative accomplishments for its constituents through the efforts of NAPO's Washington office, that works independently, and in conjunction with other public safety, public employee, and public employer groups.

NAPO has also defeated efforts that would have seriously undermined law enforcement interests.

The Hill magazine recognized NAPO as responsible for one of what they called the “Top Ten Lobbying Victories” of 2015. NAPO was acknowledged for its work on the passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act, and continuing health care coverage for 9/11 responders and survivors.

Over the years, NAPO has had a significant impact across many legislative areas, including, but not limited to:

1. Enactment of the Social Security Fairness Act, repealing the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP);
2. Repeal of the Excise (“Cadillac”) Tax on employer-sponsored health plans;
3. Enactment of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, named after two NYPD Officers and NAPO members;
4. Enactment of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act and the Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis Act;
5. Enactment of the COPS Counseling Act;
6. Enactment of 1988 legislation, which raised the Public Safety Officers’ Benefit (PSOB) for officers severely disabled or killed in the line of duty from \$50,000 to \$100,000, plus annual cost of living indexing, as well as follow on legislation in 2002, which raised the PSOB base from \$100,000 to \$250,000. The base was raised to \$318,111 in 2011 and is now \$448,575 in Fiscal 2025;
7. Enactment of legislation that made the PSOB death benefit to survivors federal income tax free;
8. Enactment of the Public Safety Officer Support Act, making PTSD and PTSD-related suicides line of duty injuries under the PSOB Program;
9. Enactment of the Protecting America’s First Responders Act;
10. Enactment of legislation creating a presumption under the PSOB Program that COVID-related deaths and disability are in the line of duty;

11. Enactment and implementation of the Hometown Heroes Act, expanding PSOB coverage to include those law enforcement officers who suffer debilitating or fatal heart attacks or strokes while on, or related to, active duty or training work;
12. Enactment and permanent reauthorization of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, including the World Trade Center Health Program and the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund;
13. Enactment and renewal of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) and the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP);
14. Enactment of the Police, Fire, and Emergency Officers Educational Assistance Act;
15. Enactment of the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act;
16. Permanent Reauthorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act;
17. Enactment of the Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act (H.R. 218, right to carry legislation) and the Improvements to the Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act;
18. Implementation of final Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Normal Retirement Age rules that protect public safety pension plans and include safe harbors for public safety employees;
19. Enactment of the Putting First Responders First Act, making first responder disability-related compensation tax free through retirement;
20. Enactment of the Healthcare Enhancement for Local Public Safety (HELPS) Retirees Act, helping retired public safety officers pay for qualified health insurance premiums;
21. Enactment of the Don't Tax Our Fall Public Safety Heroes Act, making state death benefits to survivors of law enforcement officers tax free;
22. Restoration under President Donald Trump of state and local law enforcements' access to surplus military equipment through the U.S. Department of Defense's 1033 Program and Departments of Justice and Homeland Security grant programs;
23. Enactment of the Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act;
24. Enactment of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act (includes a provision that protects emergency responders from occupational exposure to communicable diseases);
25. Enactment of the Fair Sentencing Act;

26. Enactment of a Nationwide Interoperable Communications Network for Public Safety;
27. Enactment of the National Amber Alert Act;
28. Enactment of the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act (FIRST NET);
29. Enactment of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act;
30. Enactment of the Combat Meth Act;
31. Enactment of the Disaster Area Health and Environmental Monitoring Act (provides for free medical screenings to first responders, volunteers, and emergency personnel who endure serious health risks to respond to national disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks);
32. Enactment of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Amendments (implemented the United States Supreme Court's decision in the *Garcia* case, upholding the constitutionality of the FLSA as applied to non-federal public employees);
33. Elimination nationwide of the "source tax" on law enforcement retirees' incomes;
34. Enactment of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (omnibus anti-crime legislation);
35. Enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act; and
36. Enactment of legislation which prohibits implementation of the IRS proposal to tax accrued public employee leave as current income.

The governmental issues affecting the vital interests of law enforcement officers continue to grow daily as crime, terrorism, and other concerns occupy more of the time of Congress and the Administration. The aforementioned legislative victories are illustrative of the areas where law enforcement participation through NAPO has made, and continues to make, a difference.

NAPO Information and Events: The NAPO website, (www.napo.org), contains important information for law enforcement personnel regarding upcoming legislation, Supreme Court rulings, NAPO seminars and conferences, and safety and security hazards to law enforcement personnel. Real time information for NAPO news can also be accessed by following and "liking" the National Association of Police Organizations on Facebook and Truth Social and by following NAPO on X and Instagram @NAPOpolice.

NAPO affiliates and representatives meet frequently with members of Congress and their staff at home and in Washington, D.C. to lobby pending issues of concern. Delegates establish NAPO's legislative goals and priorities at the NAPO Annual Conference. Also, in election years, delegates issue endorsements of candidates for national and Congressional offices who have earned law enforcement's support.

NAPO holds an annual **Legislative Luncheon on Capitol Hill**, which provides an opportunity to honor members of Congress and staffers who have been most supportive of law enforcement. It also provides NAPO's members with a chance to convey NAPO's top legislative priorities to members of Congress and their staff.

The prestigious **TOP COPS Awards®** are presented annually to sworn law enforcement officers from across the country who are nominated by their peers for outstanding service. NAPO held its first **TOP COPS Awards®** ceremony in Washington, D.C. in 1994, with special guests, including the President of the United States, and continues to pay tribute to outstanding law enforcement officers across the country each year.

NAPO also sponsors an **Annual Police, Fire, EMS & Municipal Employee Pension and Benefits Seminar**, and has sponsored seminars on prevention of law enforcement officer suicide, union responses to critical incidents, federal election law for police associations, the *Garrity* decision, collective bargaining, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), law enforcement stress management, drug testing, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and public relations.

NAPO Public Affairs: In 2002, NAPO established the **National Association of Police Organizations Relief Fund**, dedicated to providing “for the physical, medical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of law enforcement officers and their families who have suffered hardship as a result of catastrophe, storm, flood, earthquake, fire, evacuation, relocation, disaster, war, or other acts or accidents of nature or man.”

NAPO established a sister 501(c)(3) research and education organization in 1991, the **Police Research and Education Project (PREP)**. PREP has conducted research on law enforcement stress and

its effect on the family under the auspices of National Institute of Justice grants.

In 1994, the **National Law Enforcement Officers' Rights Center** was established under PREP to protect officers' legal and constitutional rights. The Rights Center is the first legal support center established to help law enforcement officers deal with the increase of litigation sweeping through the law enforcement community.

NAPO and the Rights Center have successfully represented the interests of rank-and-file officers before the U.S. Supreme Court and other state and federal appellate courts on multiple occasions. NAPO has been allowed by the Courts to participate and submit arguments as an *amicus curiae* in such cases as Mullenix v. Luna (qualified immunity), Vega v. Tekoh (federal civil rights liability), Texas v. Kleinert (sovereign immunity for local officers assigned to federal task force), Cheatham v. Phoenix (union release time for officers), Vann v. City of Southaven (qualified immunity), Chung v. Silva (qualified immunity), Cole v. Carson (qualified immunity), Maryland v. Wilson (protection for officers on traffic stops), Lane v. Franks (First Amendment rights of public employees), Janus v. AFSCME (public sector employee associations rights), Kaufman County v. Winzer (qualified immunity), Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association (fair share fees), Harris v. Quinn (agency fees), Duberry v. District of Columbia (retired officers' right to carry concealed firearm under H.R. 218), Raymond v. North Carolina PBA (officer's right to police association attorney), Schultz v. Wescom (qualified immunity), Lewis v. Vasquez (qualified immunity), and Bland v Roberts (right of officers to be free from political retaliation).

NAPO is a founding member of the **National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)**. NAPO's efforts led to the successful passage of legislation that established the Memorial and NAPO representatives served on the site selection and inscription committees. NAPO, through its members, raised over \$1 million for the Memorial.

NAPO also serves, or has served, as a board or coalition member for the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Advisory Council (LECTAC), the National Armor Advisory Board and Summit

(reviews current issues regarding body armor design and usage), the National Blue Mass (held for law enforcement officers during National Police Week), the National Blue Alert Advisory Group, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Target Capabilities Working Groups of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Public Safety Sub Council of the National Occupational Research Agenda of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Task Group on Medical Guidelines for Law Enforcement Officers, the National Executive Committee of the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security (Social Security issues), the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems, the Crime Prevention Council of America, and National Decertification Index Advisory Group.

RIGHTS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYER - EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT “COLLECTIVE BARGAINING”

Background: Congress has long recognized the benefits of a cooperative working relationship between labor and management. Over the years, Congress has extended collective bargaining rights to public employees including letter carriers, postal clerks, public transit employees, and congressional employees. However, under federal and state laws, some public safety employees, including those in law enforcement, corrections, and fire, are denied the basic right of collective bargaining.

While many public safety agencies have benefited from a productive partnership between employers and employees, other agencies have not. Currently, many states do not allow public safety employees the fundamental right to bargain with their employers. History shows that denying workers the right to bargain collectively causes poor morale, the waste of resources, unfair and inadequate working conditions, and low productivity. Ultimately, it is the public’s safety and security that is jeopardized by such poor working conditions for police.

NAPO has long championed the **Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act**, which would:

- Give the right to public safety officers to form and join a union or association of their own choosing.
- Give the right to public safety officers to bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions.
- Provide for fact finding and mediation to resolve disputes, which may include binding arbitration.
- Prohibit strikes and lockouts by public safety officers and agencies.

- Protect current state laws, certifications, and collective bargaining agreements.

States that offer equal or greater collective bargaining rights would be exempt from this federal statute. The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act will not overturn current collective bargaining laws – it will only provide the most basic of collective bargaining rights to those who currently do not have them.

NAPO Position: There are many law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every day to preserve the security and peace that our nation enjoys. However, these same officers are denied the basic American rights of collective bargaining for wages, hours, and safe working conditions. Basic collective bargaining rights must be extended to all state and local public safety officers.

In addition to supporting the **Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (S. 636 / H.R. 1505)**, NAPO is working to protect the current collective bargaining rights of officers from being eroded. We oppose any effort to eliminate language from collective bargaining agreements that protects officer due process during investigations of misconduct and their ability to bargain over disciplinary and accountability issues.

STATE & LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER BILL OF RIGHTS

Background: Throughout the country, many states lack coherent guidelines and procedures for law enforcement departments to follow to protect officers' due process rights. Sworn law enforcement officers are held to an extremely high standard of personal and professional conduct, due to the enormous responsibilities they exercise. However, many officers are denied the same basic due process rights that all other citizens enjoy. In approximately fifty percent of the states, officers enjoy some legal protections against false accusations and abuse. However, this leaves hundreds of thousands of officers with limited or

no due process or who face limitations or retaliation when exercising these rights.

In addition, sometimes individuals are reluctant to file a complaint against an officer, perceiving correctly or incorrectly that management will not take the complaint seriously and conduct an inquiry. Often departments lack any guidelines and procedures for handling and investigating complaints, thus raising doubts about officer accountability.

The **Law Enforcement Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights Act** would provide officers with the following protections:

- Officers would have the right to engage in civic activity and would not be prohibited from running for elective office because of their profession.
- Departments would have to establish effective procedures for receipt, review, and investigation of law enforcement and other complaints against law enforcement officers.
- If disciplinary action is foreseeable, officers would be notified of the investigation, the nature of the alleged violation, the eventual outcome of the inquiry, and the recommendations made to superiors by the investigators.
- Questioning of a law enforcement officer would be conducted at reasonable times, preferably while the officer is on duty, unless exigent circumstances apply.
- Questioning of the law enforcement officer would take place at the offices of those conducting the investigation or at the place where the officer reports to work, unless the officer consents to another location.
- A single investigator would question officers, and the officer would be informed of the name, rank, and command of the officer conducting the investigation.
- Officers could not be threatened, harassed, or promised rewards to induce the answering of any question.
- Officers under investigation would be entitled to have legal counsel or any other individual of their choice present at the questioning.

- Officers would be entitled to a hearing, notification in advance of the date of the hearing, and access to transcripts and other relevant documents and evidence generated by the hearing. The officer would also be entitled to be represented by legal counsel or another representative at the hearing.
- Officers would have the opportunity to comment in writing on any adverse materials placed in his or her personnel file.
- There would be defined 'just cause' factors to be considered by the hearing officer or board for an officer to be found guilty or liable for disciplinary action; and mitigating factors would also be noted, which could reduce the severity of the disciplinary action.

NAPO'S Position: NAPO recognizes a serious need for the implementation of standards and procedures to guide both state and local law enforcement agencies and law enforcement officers during internal investigations, administrative hearings, and evaluation of citizen complaints. Too often law enforcement officers are subjected to the whim of their departments or local politics during internal investigations and administrative hearings.

NAPO also supports the implementation of standards to guide law enforcement agencies in developing and operating a fair and effective investigative process. Individuals should have the right to file a complaint, to have the complaint investigated, and to be informed of its final disposition, including learning the outcome of the investigation and any resulting disciplinary action.

Consequently, NAPO has actively fought for the enactment of this legislation since 1990. In consultation with attorneys representing law enforcement officers, NAPO will continue to exert every effort with Congress and other national interest groups to support this legislation, protect officer due process, and improve transparency and accountability in law enforcement agencies.

STATE & LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

COPS PROGRAM & BYRNE JAG PROGRAM

Background: Serving as the lead national law enforcement organization, NAPO worked tirelessly with members of Congress and the Administration to enact the **Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)** Program in 1994. Since its inception, the COPS Office, within the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), has been extremely successful in implementing and carrying out its designated objectives. To date, the COPS Hiring Program has assisted over 16,000 jurisdictions with over \$14 billion in funding to hire more than 135,000 community policing officers across the United States. This funding has contributed to continued success in combating crime, drug use, and gangs; reducing and preventing the manufacture, distribution, and use of illegal drugs; improving law enforcement and community relations; and addressing emerging law enforcement needs.

In recent years, the COPS Office has taken on additional NAPO priorities such as the **National Blue Alert Network**, the **Officer Safety and Wellness Working Group**, the **Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA)** and the **Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act** program, both of which promote officer mental wellness and peer mentoring.

In addition to the COPS Program, state and local law enforcement benefit greatly from the **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG)** Program, as it is the only comprehensive federal crime-fighting program. It allows for a system wide approach that enables communities to target resources to their most pressing local needs. This important program funds state and local law enforcement, including multi-jurisdictional drug and gang task forces, information sharing and technology, county jails, prosecutors, drug courts, and juvenile delinquency and drug treatment programs. In fact, it is the only source of federal funding for multi-jurisdictional task forces and prosecutors.

With the passage of the **Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act** in December 2022, Byrne JAG funding will go towards supporting best practices in de-escalation training and law enforcement/mental health treatment partnerships and to support train-the-trainer trainings nationwide.

COPS, together with Byrne JAG, provide state and local law enforcement with necessary funding to assist their efforts to keep communities safe.

Other DOJ state and local law enforcement assistance grant programs NAPO strongly supports:

- The **Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program**, a critical resource that helps state and local agencies purchase bullet-resistant body armor for their officers.
- **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, which continues to be a vital program in state and local law enforcement efforts to reduce violent crime in our communities.
- The **Body-Worn Camera Policy and Implementation Program** under the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) assists state and local law enforcement agencies purchase and lease body-worn cameras (BWC) and establish BWC programs.

NAPO Position: Most law enforcement officials and the public recognize the benefits of putting more police on the street, which is why initiatives to put and maintain more officers in the field to promote community policing and fight crime should be continued. As major cities across the country are facing serious recruitment and retention challenges and violent crime remains high, now is not the time to put additional stress on state and local police forces by leaving them short-handed. It is vital that the COPS Program and the Byrne-JAG Program be adequately funded.

In addition to our continued efforts to reauthorize and increase funding for the COPS and Byrne JAG programs, we are also fighting to preserve the original intent of the COPS Program: to support the hiring and retention of community police officers. The COPS Program should not be used as a tool to move a distinct political agenda at the expense of critical funding for the hiring and retention of officers as well as officer

and community safety measures such as lowering response time for emergency calls and two officer patrol units.

NAPO supports the **Invest to Protect Act (S. 768)**, the **Strong Communities Act (S. 1316)**, and the **COPS Reauthorization Act**.

LAW ENFORCEMENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Background: An April 2018 white paper by the Ruderman Family Foundation found that first responders are more likely to die from suicide than in the line of duty. Between 2020 and 2024, there were over 900 known police officer suicides. Additionally, according to the National Study of Police Suicides, officers are 2.5 times more likely to die from suicides than from homicides, a much more sobering statistic. As suicides among police officers are often reported as accidents or met with official silence, definitive numbers are hard to come by.

State and local law enforcement officers are our nation's first responders. They respond to our country's greatest tragedies as well as violent crimes and horrible accidents that unfortunately occur more frequently in our communities. They have seen and experienced horrors that they cannot forget, yet they still put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities.

In passing the **Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) (Public Law No. 115-113)**, the **Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act (Public Law No. 116-32)**, and the **COPS Counseling Act (Public Law No. 117-60)** – all NAPO priority legislation – Congress recognized the stress and strain of the job and acted to help give officers the resources they need to address their emotional and mental wellbeing.

These programs help law enforcement agencies establish or enhance mental health care services for their officers by making grants available to initiate and expand confidential peer mentoring programs, developing resources for mental health providers based on the specific mental health challenges faced by law enforcement, and supporting law

enforcement officers by studying the effectiveness of crisis hotlines and annual mental health checks. Peer mentoring and peer support programs in particular have proven vital to successful officer mental health and wellness programs as officers are able to cope more effectively by talking with someone who knows and understands what they are going through.

Further, officers are first and foremost public servants. Unless the strictest privacy standards are established and maintained, an officer's mental health care, including that through peer mentoring services, can be discoverable on the public record, used in court proceedings, or affect their employment. Officers feel more comfortable admitting their concerns and asking questions and are more likely to take advantage of mental health services when they know those services will be confidential.

Approximately only half of states provide confidentiality protections to critical incident debriefs and peer support services. In these states, the group debriefings, conducted by peer support and mental health professionals, are protected. Do-not-discuss orders are suspended for the duration of the debriefing and officers are free to discuss their feelings and concerns. All communications and records kept during these debriefings may not be disclosed in a civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding, with certain, limited exceptions.

NAPO Position: Our nation's law enforcement officers have given up so much to protect and serve our communities. The least we can do is ensure they have the mental health and wellness services they need for the safety of themselves, their families and communities.

While Congress appropriated \$10 million for these programs in FY 2025, significantly more funding is needed for the establishment and expansion of confidential peer counseling services in order to adequately meet the demand in cities and states across the country.

We also believe that the Federal Rules of Evidence must be amended to expand the privileges section (Rule 501) to exclude from introduction into evidence in federal proceedings statements made by an officer in the context of critical incident peer debriefs and peer-involved mental health care for officers involved in highly stressful situations.

NAPO supports full and robust funding for peer mentoring programs and mental health services for all officers. Further, NAPO is calling for legislation to make all communications made by officers to crisis counseling services (including peer services), and all records related to the communications, confidential.

NAPO supports the **Fighting PTSD Act (S. 825)**, the **First Responder Wellness Act (S. 666)**, and the **Reauthorizing Support and Treatment for Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act (S. 419)**.

9/11 WORLD TRADE CENTER HEALTH PROGRAM FUNDING

NAPO fought hard for the passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act in 2010 and its reauthorization in 2015 to ensure our nation took care of the victims and first responders who are coping with 9/11-related chronic health conditions. James Zadroga, a New York City Police Department Detective and member of NAPO, died of respiratory disease caused by his exposure to toxic chemicals during rescue and recovery efforts at Ground Zero.

In 2015, Congress, recognizing the importance of this program, reauthorized the World Trade Center Health Program until 2090. Unfortunately, this has proven to not be enough as the reauthorization imposed yearly spending caps tied to inflation only as measured by the Consumer Price Index and not the historically higher, and faster rising, medical cost inflation. The WTCHP faces a projected shortfall that will cause it to not have enough funds to provide care for those 9/11 responders and survivors still suffering the physical and mental impacts of 9/11.

In 2022, NAPO was able to help secure \$1 billion in additional funding for the WTCHP as part of the Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations Act to help safeguard the program for the next several years. While this was short of the \$3 billion we were calling for, this money will allow the program to avert any cuts to services until at least FY 2027 and give us more time to achieve an agreement on long-term funding that will make the WTCHP whole.

In 2023, NAPO secured an additional \$444 million over the next 10 years to further close the gap in funding as well as the creation of the Pentagon and Shanksville Fund to cover active-duty Department of Defense military or civilians, along with other Federal employees, who responded to the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pennsylvania sites on September 11, 2001.

We are now calling on Congress to pass the **9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act (S. 739 / H.R. 1410)**, which would close the funding gap to ensure the WTCHP is fully funded as well as make important changes to improve the ability of the Program to certify both health care providers and WTC-related health conditions.

NAPO Position: The 9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation. It is our obligation and duty to remember these heroes and ensure that survivors who risked their lives to protect us continue to receive the compensation and care that they deserve and that has been promised to them. Congress must act now and pass this important legislation before cuts to services are put in motion and the health and wellness of our 9/11 responders is adversely impacted.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

OPPOSITION TO MANDATORY SOCIAL SECURITY PARTICIPATION

Background: The Social Security program is an important source of future retirement security for millions of Americans. NAPO realizes that the program needs to be restructured, and its financing put on sound footing for future generations of retirees, in view of projections that the Social Security Trust Fund will be exhausted by 2035.

State and local governments were excluded from the Social Security Act of 1935 because there were (and still are) questions as to the extent to which the federal government could tax state and local governments. Also, many state and local governments had their own pension systems. The 1950 amendments to the Act allowed state and local governments to voluntarily participate in the Social Security program, and a number of states joined the system. In July of 1991, Social Security was made mandatory for state and local government employees who do not participate in any employer/employee retirement system.

Mandating Social Security taxes on the 70 percent of public safety officers not presently covered would have a dramatic and negative impact on the recruitment and retention of well-qualified public safety officers. In addition, it would constitute an unfunded mandate on public safety agencies, amounting to more than \$1 billion in the first year alone. Under a mandatory Social Security system, law enforcement officers would pay more for fewer benefits, when compared to their current pension plans.

Social Security was not designed for and does not address the special needs of law enforcement officers as follows:

1. Officers and their families need the security of service-connected disability and death benefits. Social Security benefits do not provide anywhere near the same level of benefits of current public

safety pension plans, and provide no disability benefits unless one is totally unable to perform any work, not just public safety work.

2. Social Security is not appropriate for public safety officers who normally retire prior to, or around 55 years of age, due to the stresses, dangers, and injuries of the job. Unlike current plans, where officers may retire after 20 or more years of service, Social Security would not pay these individuals until they reached 62, 67, or even 70 years of age. Forcing police officers to work until the age of 70 would negatively impact public safety.

If enacted into law, mandatory Social Security taxes on public safety workers would do the following:

- A majority of state and local government entities would both pay the newly imposed 6.2 percent tax, (the employer's half of the 12.4 percent Social Security tax), and retain their current pension systems, because they are required to do so by law or collective bargaining agreements. Imposing Social Security taxes on these state and local governments would strain their budgets and would have serious consequences on the pay and working conditions of their public safety officers.
- Officers would automatically suffer a *de facto* pay decrease through the newly imposed 6.2 percent tax, (the employee's half of the 12.4 percent Social Security tax), and it would become more difficult to retain the most qualified officers.
- Because raising taxes to make up the difference is not politically feasible, state and local governments would likely take two or more of the following actions: (1) decrease the number of public safety officers to retain current pay levels and benefits; (2) reduce the pay of law enforcement officers; (3) freeze future cost-of-living increases; or (4) not provide public safety officers with the essential equipment and resources needed to effectively perform their work.
- Most state and local governments would pay the 6.2 percent tax by proportionally reducing their contributions to current pension systems. Trying to blend the special needs of actuarially funded pensions systems with the structure of Social Security would create serious complications and costs for benefit design and administration, as well as collective bargaining. Over time, mandatory Social Security taxes, even if only applied to new hires,

would threaten the financial viability of sound, secure, and long-standing retirement systems, eventually destroying the existing retirement and disability benefits for public safety officers.

- Reducing employer and employee contributions to current pension plans in order to pay Social Security taxes would have serious repercussions for those employees already having vested rights and would make it difficult to recruit the best candidates for public safety work. Over time, the increasing transfer of significant contributions (of both employers and employees) from pension funds to Social Security would severely reduce the investment income, as more grandfathered employees in the current systems retire and new employees covered by Social Security are hired to replace them. This would cause pension funds to be under-funded and reduce benefits, seriously harming the future benefits paid to retirees.
- Significantly scaling back and reducing current retirement pensions, death benefits, and line-of-duty disability pay for public safety officers, even if done only for new hires, would provide public safety officers and their families with much less protection. This would cause law enforcement and firefighting to become much less desirable as careers. Retention of current public safety officers and recruitment of new officers would become difficult.

NAPO Position: NAPO supports a long-term solution, *so long as* such a solution does not mandate that all or some state and local government employees, including newly hired ones and their employing agencies, be required to pay Social Security taxes. Adding presently non-covered public safety workers will not fix the basic problems of Social Security. While it will bring new workers into the Social Security system, the system will also have to assume a liability for these new workers, which will eventually have to be paid.

Even if Social Security taxes were limited to new hires, the likely consequences of mandatory Social Security taxes, including reduced benefits, lower salaries, and/or frozen cost-of-living increases, would make law enforcement and fire safety work less financially desirable. It makes no sense whatsoever to tamper with a system of pension funds that is working well and paying needed benefits to those who serve and protect the public.

EXPANSION OF THE HELPS RETIREES ACT

Background: 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. This provision is important as many law enforcement retirees lose their employer-provided health insurance and are years away from being Medicare-eligible, forcing them to spend their retirement money on health insurance premiums.

Under the HELPS Retirees provision, retired public safety officers can use up to \$3,000 annually from their pension funds tax-free, including from defined benefit and defined contribution plans, to pay for qualified health insurance and long-term care insurance premiums.

Unfortunately, healthcare costs have gone up dramatically since 2006 and the \$3,000 per year permitted under the provision is no longer adequate to cover even half a year's worth of health insurance premiums. The amount a retired public safety officer is allowed to take from their pension funds annually must be increased to keep up with the rising costs of health and long-term care insurance.

NAPO Position: Increasing the allowable amount under the HELPS Retirees provision from \$3,000 to \$6,000, as the **Public Safety Retirees Healthcare Protection Act** would do, continues the purpose and intention of the original HELPS Retirees Act: to help preserve the retirement security and the health of those public servants who selflessly serve and protect our communities.

NAPO also supports indexing the HELPS Retirees benefit to inflation to ensure it keeps up with the rising costs of healthcare.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

INCREASED PENALTIES FOR CRIMES AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Background: There is a serious and growing trend of ambush murders and other armed attacks on law enforcement officers. According to a May 2024 report from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), 378 officers were shot in the line of duty in 2023, of which 46 officers died from their injuries. 138 of those officers were shot and 20 died in 115 separate ambushes or premeditated, calculated assaults. While the number of officers dying from their injuries may be decreasing, the number of officers being targeted for violence remains persistently high.

NAPO supports utilizing existing federal criminal processes to prosecute (1) the assault and murder of federally funded state and local law enforcement officers, such as those officers whose agencies or jurisdictions receive aid from the federal DOJ or DHS; and (2) the assault and murder of state and local officers engaged in the protection of federally recognized civil rights, such as those officers attacked while safeguarding protests. We also are aggressively lobbying for new and increased nationwide penalties on those who harm or target for harm public safety officers by making the murder or attempted murder of a state or local police officer an aggravating factor in sentencing determinations.

President Trump signed an Executive Order on *Restoring the Death Penalty and Protecting Public Safety* on January 20, 2025, which directs the Attorney General to pursue Federal jurisdiction and the death penalty in cases involving the “murder of a law enforcement officer”. NAPO has long advocated for such a policy regarding the murder of law enforcement officers as any person who kills or assaults an officer must know that they will face serious punishment.

NAPO Position: NAPO strongly supports legislation, at both the federal and state level, that would increase penalties for violent crimes committed against law enforcement officers, including the **Protect and Serve Act (S. 167 / H.R. 1551)**, the **Back the Blue Act**, the **Thin Blue Line Act (S. 83 / H.R. 378)**, and the **Justice for Fallen Law Enforcement Act (S. 166)**. Establishing stricter penalties for those who harm law enforcement officers will deter crime.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT FOR OFFENDERS & TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Background: Individuals with mental illnesses are significantly overrepresented in the prison and jail population. State and local governments are increasingly finding the need for greater collaboration between criminal justice, juvenile justice, and mental health and substance abuse treatment systems to better allocate resources across systems, increase connections to needed services, and reduce recidivism.

Further, law enforcement officers are on the front lines in responding to and intervening in mental and behavioral health crises. Officers need to be given the tools and training necessary to identify and respond to mental health issues in the communities they serve. This supports improved responses and outcomes to interactions between police officers and persons affected by mental illness.

The **Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA)** was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2004 and authorized a \$50 million grant program to be administered by the DOJ. The law created the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC) to help states and counties design and implement collaborative efforts between criminal justice and mental health systems.

In 2022, Congress reauthorized the JMHCPC for an additional five years. The reauthorization expanded training for law enforcement to identify and respond appropriately to individuals with mental illnesses. It also

strengthened support for crisis intervention teams and mental health courts and reinforced support for co-responder teams, amongst other important programmatic improvements.

For Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, Congress recognized the importance of the JMHCP and funded it at \$40 million. This funding is vital to ensuring better law enforcement and community responses to persons experiencing mental health and substance abuse crises.

NAPO Position: NAPO is a strong supporter of the JMHCP and expanded mental health and crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers. The JMHCP helps criminal justice and mental health agencies work collaboratively towards better outcomes and assists law enforcement agencies across the United States in their responsibilities in assisting citizens with mental health conditions.

NAPO continues to support efforts to improve access to mental health services for people who come into contact with the criminal justice system, and to provide law enforcement officers the tools and training they need to identify and respond to mental health issues in the communities they serve.

POLICE REFORM

Background: As an organization representing rank-and-file officers, NAPO supports improved policing practices, particularly regarding ensuring transparency, accountability, and improved training in law enforcement. However, we have strong concerns when it comes to diminishing the rights of law enforcement officers to protect themselves and the public.

The areas of most significant concern include efforts to amend Section 242 of Title 18 United States Code to lower the standard for *mens rea* and the practical elimination of qualified immunity for law enforcement officers. Combined, these two provisions take away any legal protections for officers while making it easier to prosecute them for mistakes on the job, not just criminal acts. With the change to qualified immunity, an officer can go to prison for an unintentional act that

unknowingly violated an unknown and unknowable “right”. NAPO recognizes that officers are accountable for their actions, but the consequence of this would be making criminals out of decent officers enforcing the laws in good faith.

Another issue of serious concern is proposed changes to the current legal standard of “objective reasonableness” for the use of force announced in the 1989 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Graham v. Connor*. The Supreme Court has repeatedly said that the most important factor to consider in applying force is the threat faced by the officer or others *at the scene*. The use of force must be reasonable given what the officer perceived to be the threat at the time, not with the 20/20 vision of hindsight.

Finally, one of the underlying assumptions that runs throughout the police reform narrative is that law enforcement officers should not be given the right to due process, a right we give all citizens, a right all unions and associations work to protect for their members in disciplinary actions. This is incredibly concerning. Law enforcement officers must be given due process during internal investigations, administrative hearings, and evaluation of citizen complaints. Too often law enforcement officers are subjected to the whim of their departments or local politics during internal investigations and administrative hearings.

NAPO Position: For any police reform to be both fair and effective, the views of rank-and-file officers, who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe and have firsthand knowledge of the issues that are being considered, must be engaged. Law enforcement officers have the greatest stake in the outcomes of any forthcoming policies and legislation, both as public safety officers who are responsible for carrying out the law, and as citizens of communities that will be impacted by new policies on public safety. It is, quite literally, a matter of life and death for them when considering when and how they may defend themselves.

NAPO is fighting to safeguard the legal protections for our nation’s law enforcement officers and protect their right to defend themselves and the public. We support the **Qualified Immunity Act (S. 122)**.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SAFETY ACT (LEOSA) REFORM

Background: NAPO is proud to have worked with members of Congress to enact the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) in 2004 to allow well-qualified off-duty and retired officers to carry their firearms for the protection of themselves, their families, and our nation's communities. However, today, qualified off-duty and retired officers continue to encounter unnecessary roadblocks when exercising their legal right to carry a firearm.

NAPO supports the **LEOSA Reform Act (S. 679 / H.R. 2243)**, which would address the specific issues being faced by officers in exercising these rights, including expanding the areas qualified current or retired officers are allowed to carry a firearm, such as in a school zone. LEOSA currently does not exempt an officer from the Gun Free School Zone Act, while federal statute exempts concealed carry permits from that Act. This would bring LEOSA in line with federal concealed carry law.

Importantly, the LEOSA Reform Act also addresses the issues of magazine capacity and qualification for concealed carry under LEOSA. While LEOSA exempts officers from state restrictions on the type of ammunition that can be carried, it does not exempt them from state restrictions regarding magazine capacity. Many officers when traveling to other states unknowingly put themselves at legal jeopardy when their magazine does not comply with state law. The LEOSA Reform Act would allow officers to carry any magazine not prohibited by federal law.

Regarding qualification to carry under LEOSA, the legislation would amend the qualification standards to allow retired law enforcement officers to obtain certification from any certified firearms instructor, which could include retired law enforcement firearms instructors and civilian firearms instructors, and the officers may be qualified to any state standard. This would address issues many retired officers, particularly those who retired to a different state than the one they served in, have faced when trying to qualify under LEOSA.

NAPO Position: NAPO firmly believes that all qualified off-duty and retired or separated officers across the country should be able to carry firearms for the protection of themselves, their families, and our nation's communities.

With the rise in targeted violence against law enforcement officers and violent crimes in our communities, allowing all qualified officers and retirees, who have sworn to serve and protect our communities, to be armed in accordance with LEOSA would allow them to respond more efficiently and effectively in emergencies for the safety of themselves and those around them. The LEOSA Reform Act will go a long way to ensuring all qualified off-duty and retired officers across the country can legally carry their firearm under the law.

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER SECURITY: CRIME CONTROL & SANCTUARY CITIES

Background: According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), there are approximately 33,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs with about 1.4 million members criminally active in the U.S. today. Gangs have been directly linked to drug and gun trafficking, prostitution and human trafficking, fraud, violent maiming, and assault and murder.

Cross-border crime by gangs is a significant concern for law enforcement as it impacts communities both along our Southwest border and across the country as drugs – including fentanyl – trafficked across the border are transported and sold on our neighborhood streets. Along with drugs, gangs bring an increase in assaults, larceny, and burglary to our communities. Targeting aliens associated with criminal gangs and violent crimes for deportation would give law enforcement an important tool in fighting cross-border gang crimes as well as the steady growth in gang participation nationwide.

Sanctuary policies in cities and jurisdictions across the country, however, make it difficult for law enforcement to effectively protect communities from violent criminal aliens. The country's immigration system relies on local law enforcement complying with immigration

detainers - requests from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for local law enforcement to hold a detained immigrant temporarily - to give federal law enforcement an opportunity to take the individual into custody. Sanctuary cities forbid their local law enforcement from fully cooperating with federal immigration officials, which has led to the release of violent criminals back into our communities.

NAPO Position: NAPO supports the elimination of sanctuary jurisdictions, which pose real threats to the American people, and increases penalties for criminals who re-enter the United States illegally, which provides federal, state and local law enforcement vital tools to help keep our communities safe. We also believe that foreign nations and immigrants associated with gangs and criminal organizations should be barred from entering the country and those already in the country should be ineligible for deferred deportation and should be removed expeditiously.

NAPO also supports legislation, such as the **Stop Dangerous Sanctuary Cities Act (S. 685)**, that explicitly states that local law enforcement officers have legal authority to comply with immigration detainers.

EXTRADITION OF COP- KILLERS

Background: Under the U.S. – Mexico Extradition Treaty, enacted in 1980, both countries may refuse to extradite their nationals, unless the country seeking extradition assures that the death penalty will not be imposed. In 2001, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled that this language encompasses the extradition of anyone who faces the possibility of the death penalty *or* life in prison. This ruling requires the United States to assure a sentence of a fixed number of years to prosecute a criminal who has fled to Mexico, which is impossible as neither a judge nor a prosecutor can make such a judgment in advance of a trial. Since 2001, many violent felons have fled to Mexico to evade prosecution under the auspices of this ruling.

Mexico is not the only country that harbors violent felons who have fled the United States to avoid facing justice. Joanne Chesimard is the only

woman on the FBI's most wanted terrorist list for her role in the cold-blooded killing of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster in 1973. William Morales, a bomb maker for the militant FALN, is responsible for the tragic bombing of Fraunces Tavern in Manhattan in 1975 as well as numerous other FALN bombings that killed and maimed scores of victims, including three New York City Detectives. Both Chesimard and Morales fled to Cuba and are currently living free there.

The fact that Chesimard and Morales – and violent fugitives like them – are living free in Cuba is an affront to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our communities as law enforcement officers – above all to the family and friends of police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

NAPO Position: NAPO continues to lobby the Administration and Congress to reconsider the U.S. – Mexico Extradition Treaty and to encourage the Mexican government to work with the Mexican Supreme Court to reconsider its 2001 decision blocking extradition to the United States.

The Administration must also prioritize the rendition of all cop-killers and terrorists that have fled justice, whether Mexico, Cuba, or other criminal havens.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS & HEALTHCARE

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS PROGRAM

Background: 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. The families of public safety officers who have fallen or have become completely and permanently disabled in the line of duty rely on the benefits promised to them by the PSOB Program to continue on with their lives.

The PSOB Program not only provides death and disability benefits to eligible public safety officers and their survivors, but also offers financial assistance for higher education for the spouses and children of federal, state, and local public safety officers through the Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Program.

There must be transparency and accountability in the PSOB Program to make certain that the Program is being implemented as Congress intended – to unequivocally honor and support officers and their families who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. According to a September 2024, Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report, *Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program: Transparency, Claims Assistance, and Program Management Improvements Needed*, there is much that PSOB must improve on, particularly as it relates to data collection and dissemination and claimant information and communication.

NAPO Position: NAPO is a member of the PSOB Stakeholder Advisory Group and we are actively working to improve the PSOB Program within that context as well as legislatively to ensure that

survivors of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty and officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty are provided every available resource and benefit.

NAPO successfully worked to pass the **Protecting America's First Responders Act** and the **Public Safety Officer Support Act** last Congress. This Congress we are pushing the **Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act (S. 237 / H.R. 1269)**, which would include exposure-related cancers as line of duty injuries under the PSOB program.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES OF INTEREST

FEDERAL CONSENT DECREES

Background: Consent decrees are used to remedy violations of rights and protect the party that faces injury. Consent decrees should not be used to further any policy extraneous to the protection of those rights or be expanded to apply to parties not involved in the litigation.

State and local governments have often found their interests and judgments in managing their own affairs vitiated by the federal courts' structuring of consent decrees. Consent decrees often exemplify a top-down, Washington knows best, one-size-fits all, coercive approach to how state and local policing should be done, what officers should look like, and even what they should think and believe. Such agreements do not instill a sense of partnership between the DOJ and the law enforcement agencies they address, which affects the efficacy of the consent decrees. They also have deleterious effects on officer morale and public safety as rank-and-file officers feel attacked and unsupported by their governments and political officials.

NAPO Position: The DOJ should provide state and local governmental entities, including rank-and-file officers and their representatives, an adequate opportunity to respond to any allegations of legal violations; require special caution before using a consent decree to resolve disputes with state or local governmental entities; limit the circumstances in which a consent decree may be appropriate; and limit the terms for consent decrees with state and local governmental entities, including term limits for monitors.

NAPO strongly supports protecting the interests of state and local governments in managing their own affairs and limiting the duration of federal consent decrees to which state and local governments are party. Further, consent decrees should not over-reach in forcing superfluous policies on police departments.

NAPO seeks mandatory time and subject matter limits for monitoring programs instituted under federal consent decrees to protect the interests of state and local governments in managing their own affairs.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EQUIPMENT FOR STATE & LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Background: The Department of Defense 1033 program, and similar grant programs at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security that assist state and local law enforcement in acquiring surplus military equipment, have proved to be vital resources in allowing agencies to acquire items used in search and rescue operations, disaster response, and active shooter and hostage situations that they otherwise would not be able to afford.

In January 2015, President Obama issued Executive Order 13688, which greatly limited state and local law enforcement's access to surplus military equipment. NAPO participated in the Federal Interagency Law Enforcement Equipment Working Group, established under the Executive Order, and worked to ensure that defensive gear like helmets and shields remained available.

NAPO continued to oppose restrictions on this vital equipment and worked with President Trump on the issuance of Executive Order 13809 in August 2017 to restore state and local law enforcement's access to this lifesaving equipment. Unfortunately, President Biden reinstated President Obama's Executive Order 13688 on May 25, 2022, and expanded it to not only include equipment acquired through the 1033 program, but also equipment purchased through grants through the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security.

President Trump signed Executive Order 14148 on *Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions* on January 20, 2025, that repealed both President Obama's and President Biden's restrictions on state and local law enforcement's access to surplus military equipment.

NAPO Position: NAPO continues to stress that the vast majority of equipment provided under the 1033 program is defensive in nature. We

do not believe this equipment has led to the “militarization” of police, but rather has proven to be essential in protecting communities against violent criminals, terrorists, and natural disasters. Restricting the equipment available to law enforcement agencies across the nation through programs like the 1033 program would limit departments’ ability to keep our communities and our officers safe.

NAPO supports the **Lifesaving Gear for Police Act (H.R. 2654)**, which would permanently repeal all Executive Orders that placed restrictions on equipment acquired through the 1033 program or purchased through Departments of Justice and Homeland Security grants, taking the fate of law enforcement’s ability to access and acquire this equipment out of a President’s hands and placing it squarely in the purview of Congress.

POSTAL POLICE OFFICERS’ DUTIES & FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT EQUITY

Background: There are over 600 Postal Police Officers (PPOs) that patrol in and around select Postal Service facilities in the United States, including Puerto Rico. These are the uniformed law enforcement officers of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), a federal law enforcement agency. Pursuant to Title 18 U.S.C. § 3061(C), the Postal Service, and thereby the USPIS, are authorized to employ police officers to enforce Federal law. Simply put, PPOs are police officers. They wear police uniforms, carry police badges, have arrest authority, operate police vehicles (both on and off postal property), and are trained at the federal law enforcement accredited (FLETC) police academy.

Unfortunately, due to a 2020 directive from the Chief Postal Inspector, dedicated PPOs have been shackled to physical postal locations, preventing officers from fully executing their mission to ensure public safety within the nation's mail system. As a result, incidents of postal-related crime have increased at a staggering rate, specifically mail theft, robberies, and assaults on postal workers. Some of these attacks on postal workers have resulted in significant injury and even death.

Further, as federal police officers, PPOs are categorized differently than federal criminal investigators and thus do not receive the enhanced federal law enforcement pay and benefits. Because of a loophole in current law, more than 30,000 federal officers do not receive equal pay and retirement benefits – including PPOs and officers in the Federal Protective Service, Department of Defense, FBI, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Veterans Administration, U.S. Mint, Government Publishing Office, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, among others.

NAPO Position: NAPO supports the **Postal Police Reform Act (H.R. 2095)**, a bipartisan bill that will correct the current ambiguity in federal law and will once again allow Postal Police Officers to engage in street duty and patrols to stem the tide of increased criminal activity against postal employees and assets. We also support the **Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act**, bipartisan legislation that would expand and secure full federal benefits to tens of thousands of officers.

For further information on any of NAPO's legislative priorities, please contact NAPO at (703) 549-0775 or info@napo.org.

