



The Washington Report

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

May 26, 2015

NAPO Victory! **Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act Passes**

Last week, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (S.178) passed the House of Representatives 420-3. (The bill passed the Senate unanimously in April 2015).

This legislation will provide much needed services to domestic trafficking victims and help to ensure that child victims ensnared in the sex trade are no longer arrested and treated as criminals.

This legislation will also boost support for and protection of victims of human trafficking by increasing law enforcement resources, enhancing victims' services, and increasing penalties in an effort to combat child sex trafficking, child pornography, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.

NAPO expended all available efforts to ensure this legislation passed. We worked closely with senior staffers for the legislation's Senate and House sponsors, **Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)** and **Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX)**, to pass this bill. (Congressman Poe submitted a letter of support for the legislation, signed by NAPO and other stakeholders, to the official Congressional Record on May 18, 2015).

We are thrilled to report that our efforts were successful. Thank you for all of your support in moving this bill forward.

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

NAPO VICTORY!!!

President Signs the *Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act* & *Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act* Into Law

Last week, President Obama signed the *Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act* and the *Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act* into law.

The *Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act* clarifies that both federal and state death benefits for the survivors of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty should be treated the same and not be subjected to federal income tax. Survivor benefits for federal law enforcement officers are currently not subject to federal income tax, but there is some ambiguity about the treatment of these benefits for similar state-based programs. This legislation will ensure that

families of fallen officers are not forced to pay an excessive tax after their loved ones gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation.

The Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act will assist with the establishment of a nationwide Blue Alert system to apprehend violent criminals who have injured or killed police officers or who have made an imminent or credible threat to cause serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer. This bill is named in honor of two New York City Police Officers, and NAPO members, who were assassinated while sitting in their police patrol car in December 2014. Their killer posted threats to law enforcement on social media before the attack. Implementing a nationwide Blue Alert system will help to ensure that information on credible threats, like those posted by the individual who killed Officers Ramos and Liu, is widely disseminated so that officers have advanced warning, and can apprehend the criminal before he or she can do more harm.

NAPO expended all available efforts to garner support for these critical pieces of legislation, and we are thrilled that these bills have become law. We are so grateful for your support, and we are excited that all of our hard work has paid off!

If you have any questions about the *Don't Tax Our Fallen Public Safety Heroes Act* or the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, please contact Bill Johnson (bjohnson@napo.org) or Melissa Nee (mnee@napo.org).

NAPO in the News

On May 18, 2015, the Obama Administration announced that it will ban the federal transfer of certain types of military equipment to local police departments. NAPO's Executive Director, Bill Johnson, responded to the President's announcement in multiple media outlets. In a [Washington Times](#) article on the subject, Johnson stressed:

“The type of equipment that is going to be restricted appears to include such purely defensive equipment as helmets and shields...It doesn't make any sense to us that police officers and law enforcement agencies would have to get permission to protect our officers.”

Johnson furthered:

“Equally worrisome is that the president's latest police reform endeavor only further endangers the lives of law enforcement officers, who have increasingly been targets of revenge and ambush attacks in recent years. The concerns and needs of police who put their lives in danger on a daily basis are being overlooked in favor of the boisterous demands of full-time agitators and protesters. I think the equipment is going to have to come from somewhere and, given the increasing number and severity of attacks on police across the country, this is the worst possible time to withhold defensive and protective equipment from American police officers.”

The full article is available at the following site: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/18/obama-equipment-limits-take-aim-at-defensive-items/>.

Johnson was also interviewed by *Sputnik News* in an article on the White House's efforts to limit the transfer of military equipment to local police. Johnson explained: “measures limiting US law enforcement access to protective gear are untimely as assaults on policemen have increased.”

Johnson elaborated:

“As attacks on police officers grow in number and violence across the United States, we feel strongly that this is the worst possible time to prevent officers from receiving defensive items such as helmets, shields and protective vests...Our Association is concerned that the White House proposal will make it more difficult

for local police departments to obtain the equipment they need to properly protect their officers.”

The full article is available at the following site: <http://sputniknews.com/us/20150520/1022344218.html>.

PJ Media also recognized NAPO in an article, which highlighted our TOP COPS Awards Ceremony®. Vice President Biden provided the keynote address at this year’s TOP COPS Awards Ceremony®. *PJ Media* included a few of the Vice President’s remarks in support of law enforcement:

“Vice President Joe Biden praised police officers for their sacrifice, saying that Americans expect cops to do everything, including making no mistakes during times of crisis and being constitutional scholars. ‘You’re a remarkable, remarkable group of women and men and as you know – because I’ve been with you for a long, long time – we’ve all attended too damn many funerals together and fortunately a whole lot more celebrations. I find I get the same answer every time I say to you congratulations, thanks for your courage. You all say essentially the same exact thing. You say, sir, just doing my job, sir.’”

“‘What a job and what shape we’d be in as a nation if we didn’t have you doing that job. We expect you to do everything. We expect you to be constitutional scholars. We expect you to have instantaneous reactions to a crisis without making any mistake, without knowing what’s behind that door, what’s in that guy’s pocket. And when you make a mistake we come down on you like a ton of bricks but you still do your job.’”

“‘I try to explain to people — because they know my relationship from the time I was a kid with law enforcement — I try to explain to people that being a cop is not what you do — it’s who you are. It’s who you are. It’s stamped into your DNA. I don’t know each of you personally, but I know you. I know you well.’”

“‘You’re the same guys and women I grew up with in Scranton and Claymont who would always step in when a kid was being bullied, even if there were four guys. You’re always the guys, no matter what the number, you jumped in, always having somebody’s back. You’re the same ones after working all day go out and volunteer to line the Little League field when the season opens.’”

“‘You’re the same guys who do fundraisers — not just for your fallen officers you work with, but for victims and their families. Who else does that besides you?’”

The full article is available at the following link: <http://pjmedia.com/blog/biden-to-cops-we-expect-you-to-be-constitutional-scholars/>.

NAPO was honored to have the privilege to recognize these courageous men and women during our TOP COPS Awards Ceremony®. It was a privilege and an honor to have the Vice President deliver the keynote address.

NAPO will continue to ensure our members’ voices are heard loud and clear on the Hill, with the Administration, and in the media. If you have any questions about the publications cited above, please contact Bill Johnson at: bjohnson@napo.org.

NAPO Briefing on Capitol Hill - Driver's Privacy Protection Act

Last week, NAPO met with senior staffers for the following Members of Congress: **Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)**, **Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL)**, **Congressman Tom Rooney (R-FL)**, and **Congressman Patrick Murphy (D-FL)**, to discuss our proposal to modify the most recent amendment to the Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA).

The DPPA requires state motor vehicle departments to receive permission from individuals before their personal motor vehicle record may be sold or released. The DPPA amendment authorizes a private right of action for knowing violations, and a court may award automatic "damages" in the amount of \$2,500 for each time a record was accessed, even if no actual damages were proved, as well as attorney fees and other litigation costs. Law enforcement officers are subject to these stringent punishments, even if they did not review files with criminal intent.

NAPO briefed the staffers on our proposed language modifications to the DPPA amendment, which include adding a clause that explains that penalties will be applied only if persons access information with the specific intent to secure an economic benefit. Also, NAPO proposes removing the automatic imposition of the \$2,500 penalty for violations of this act, as well as adding a statement that explains there must be repeated disregard of this law for sanctions to take effect. If the language is not modified, law enforcement officers will be subject to large fines, and even the loss of their licenses for *de minimus* actions.

NAPO will continue to aggressively lobby members of Congress to gain support for our proposed language changes to the DPPA. We will keep our members updated on the status of these initiatives. If you have any questions about our efforts, please contact Melissa Nee at mnee@napo.org or Bill Johnson at bjohnson@napo.org

NAPO Meets with Senior DOJ, DHS, and DOD Leaders to Discuss the Transfer of Military Equipment to Law Enforcement Agencies

On May 18, 2015, the Obama Administration announced that it will ban federal transfers of certain types of military-style gear to local police departments.

The banned items are tracked armored vehicles, bayonets, grenade launchers, ammunition of .50-caliber or higher, and some types of camouflage uniforms. Other equipment, including tactical vehicles, explosives, helmets, and shields, will be restricted.

Shortly following the announcement, NAPO attended a meeting, hosted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Interagency Law Enforcement Equipment Working Group to discuss "Recommendations Pursuant to Executive Order 13688: Federal Support for Local Law Enforcement Equipment Acquisition."

NAPO continues to stress that the type of equipment that is going to be restricted includes purely defensive equipment, such as helmets and shields. It does not make any sense that police officers and law enforcement agencies would have to get permission to protect our officers.

Even more, this policy reform endangers the lives of law enforcement officers, who have been increasing targets of revenge and ambush attacks in recent years. The concerns and needs of police who put their lives in danger on a daily basis are being overlooked in favor of the boisterous demands of full-time agitators and protesters. (For additional information on our concerns, please see the "NAPO in the News" article above.)

NAPO will continue to engage the Administration and Congress to ensure our members' voices are heard loud and clear as policy reforms are considered. We will keep our members updated on the status of this initiative.

If you have any questions about our engagement, please contact Bill Johnson (bjohnson@napo.org) or Melissa Nee (mnee@napo.org).

Source:

Nakamura, David, and Wesley Lowery. "Obama Administration Bans Some Military-style Assault Gear from Local Police Departments." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 18 May 2015. Web. 18 May 2015.

NAPO Supports the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act

On May 20, 2015, NAPO joined fellow stakeholders on a letter to the Chairman (**Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN)**) and Ranking Member (**Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)**) of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee, to express support for the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act. (The letter is attached to this report for your convenience and review).

The Zadroga bill's two critical programs providing medical treatment and compensation for 9/11 heroes – the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund – are set to expire in October 2015 and October 2016 respectively. This legislation would permanently reauthorize these programs.

9/11 responders and survivors are still battling serious health crises resulting from exposure to the toxins at Ground Zero. More than 30,000 9/11 responders and survivors have an illness or injury caused by the attacks or their aftermath, and over two-thirds of those have more than one illness. Many are disabled and can no longer work. They are suffering from a host of chronic diseases: asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease and gastroesophageal reflux disease, and many more.

Medical research has identified more than 60 types of cancer caused by 9/11 toxins. More than 2,900 people have been diagnosed with cancers caused or made worse by the aftermath of the attacks - more than 800 New York Fire Department members and more than 550 New York Police Department personnel are struggling with serious 9/11-related illnesses, not including the more than 70 firefighters and 60 NYPD officers who have died from their 9/11-related illnesses.

Responders came from all over the country to aid in the response to the attacks. And some area residents, workers, and survivors have since moved and are currently receiving care in cities and states across the country. Participants enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Program for treatment currently reside in all 50 states and in 429 of the 435 Congressional districts in the country.

These heroes put their lives on the line to serve us, and must be afforded every resource available as they cope with chronic health conditions caused by exposure to toxic chemicals at the World Trade Center.

This legislation will also honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation. James Zadroga, a New York City Police Department Detective and member of NAPO, died of respiratory disease caused by his exposure to toxic chemicals at Ground Zero. 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 treatment and compensation that they deserve.

NAPO will continue to work with fellow stakeholders to garner support for the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act. If you have any questions about this legislation, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

House Appropriations Committee Advances Commerce-Justice-Science Spending Bill

On May 20, 2015, the House Appropriations Committee advanced the \$51.4 billion Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) spending bill with a voice vote after Democrats used the amendment process to draw attention to cuts in programs, such as Justice Department grants.

Committee **Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY)** introduced an amendment that would add \$250 million to the COPS program to fund 1,300 law enforcement officers in communities. (The cut to the COPS Hiring Program was one of the major criticisms of the bill from the White House). **Chairman John Culberson (R-TX)** objected to the amendment, and noted that he shifted grants for hiring officers to the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne-JAG). The committee voted 21-30 to reject the amendment.

Before the mark-up, NAPO contacted key members of the House Appropriations Committee to express our support for the COPS Hiring Program. NAPO continues to be very vocal that although Byrne-JAG is an important tool for law enforcement, it is distinct from the COPS Hiring Program.

NAPO will continue to work with other stakeholders to ensure funding for the COPS Hiring Program is included in the final spending package.

If you have any questions about the CJS bill, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

Source:

Ruger, Todd. "House Panel Advances Commerce-Justice-Science Spending Bill." *Congressional Quarterly*. CQ, 14 May 2015. Web. 20 May 2015.

Judiciary Committee Hearing on Body Cameras

On May 19, 2015, NAPO attended a Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism hearing, entitled: "Can Technology Increase Protection for Law Enforcement Officers and the Public?" The hearing allowed Subcommittee members to explore body camera policies. Witnesses included: **Senator Tim Scott (R-SC)**.

The week before the hearing, NAPO joined other stakeholders in a meeting with Senator Scott and his staff to discuss body camera policies.

NAPO used the meeting to stress the importance of including law enforcement leadership in discussions relating to body camera policies and requirements. NAPO also emphasized that decisions regarding officer-worn body cameras must be made on an agency-by-agency basis due to the many details and technical aspects that must be considered when implementing body camera requirements. Details to consider include: privacy concerns, storage costs, Freedom of Information Act requests, public expectations of this technology, and much more.

NAPO will continue to stay engaged on this issue to ensure our officers' voices are heard and strongly considered.

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

BJA Launches the Body-Worn Camera Toolkit

Last week, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) announced the release of the Body-Worn Camera Toolkit, an online clearinghouse of resources designed to support law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve plan and implement body-worn camera programs. This free online resource consolidates and translates the growing body of knowledge about body-worn camera programs and technology.

This toolkit was created to assist law enforcement agencies implement body-worn camera programs in a thoughtful way that builds upon the best research currently available, with input from both criminal justice and community stakeholders.

The toolkit includes information, templates, and tools focused on model policies and procedures, key privacy considerations, lessons learned for implementation, training needs, community engagement, and more. One of the toolkit's most essential features is the Resource Center to share questions, comments, and additional resources.

For more information, please visit the following site: https://www.bja.gov/bwc/?utm_source=Eblast&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=Home&utm_campaign=BWCToolkit_2015.

NAPO will continue to stay engaged with the White House and the Department of Justice to ensure that the rank-and-file perspective is heard loud and clear as proposals related to body cameras proceed. If you have any questions about our efforts or BJA's toolkit, please contact Melissa Nee at: mnee@napo.org.

NAPO Supports the Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act

The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act would improve outcomes for the criminal justice system, the mental health system, and for those with mental health conditions by doing the following, among other things:

- Extending the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA), and continuing support for mental health courts and crisis intervention teams;
- Authorizing investments in veterans treatment courts, which serve arrested veterans who suffer from PTSD, substance addiction, and other mental health conditions;
- Supporting 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;
- Increasing focus on corrections-based programs, such as transitional services that reduce recidivism rates and screening practices that identify inmates with mental health conditions;
- Supporting the development of curricula for police academies and orientations; and
- Developing programs to train federal law enforcement officers in how to respond appropriately to incidents involving a person with a mental health condition.

The bill's sponsors, **Senator Al Franken (D-MN)** and **Congressman Doug Collins (R-GA)**, submitted an Op-Ed to *The Hill*, elaborating on the importance of this legislation. The article is available at the following site: <http://thehill.com/opinion/op-ed/242735-jails-are-no-substitute-for-a-mental-health-system>.

NAPO worked closely with Senator Franken and his staff to pass a similar bill through the Senate Judiciary Committee during the 113th Congress.

We have pledged our support for the Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act, and look forward to working with Senator Franken, Congressman Collins, and other stakeholders to pass the critical legislation during this Congress.

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

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

May 20, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, representing nearly 400,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, we are writing to advise you of our strong support for S. 928, the "James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act." We are grateful for your engagement on this issue to date, and look forward to working with you to ensure Committee consideration of S. 928 at the earliest possible opportunity.

Nearly fourteen years ago the heinous and premeditated terrorist attacks against our nation claimed nearly 3,000 lives—including 72 of our fellow law enforcement officers. In the weeks and months that followed, first responders like us from every corner of America descended on New York, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania to assist in rescue and recovery efforts. At the World Trade Center (WTC) site we willingly labored countless hours searching for our friends, colleagues, and fellow citizens who were trapped in the wreckage. Although each first responder who was there would willingly volunteer again, we now see the price of that service in the 30,000 responders and survivors who are struggling with a WTC-related illness.

To address the health crisis that emerged among 9/11 responders, you and your colleagues came together in 2010 to pass the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. The World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) established by the Act now serves participants in all 50 U.S. states, including more than 2,900 individuals who have been diagnosed with a WTC-related cancer. Yet despite the strides that have been made to care for those who are ill, there is still more to be done. The WTCHP continues to identify illnesses caused by exposure to the toxins at Ground Zero, which now include more than 60 types of cancer. Ground Zero first responders continue to be diagnosed with WTC-related illnesses, many of whom suffer from multiple conditions. And law enforcement officers continue to die from 9/11. Tragically more officers have now succumbed to a WTC-related illness than perished in the collapse of the WTC towers on 9/11. It is for these reasons and many others that Congress must reauthorize the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.

On behalf of our organizations and the men and women of law enforcement that we are proud to represent, thank you again for your engagement and leadership on this important legislation. We stand ready to work with you and the other Members of the Committee to pass S. 928 as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association
National Association of Police Organizations
National Treasury Employees Union
National Troopers Coalition
Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (NYPD)

Detectives' Endowment Association (NYPD)
Sergeants Benevolent Association (NYPD)
Lieutenants Benevolent Association (NYPD)
Captains Endowment Association (NYPD)
Port Authority Police Benevolent Association

CC: Members, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, United States Senate