



The Washington Report

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

June 25, 2019

AUGUST 6-10, 2019 - STEVENSON, WA

**NAPO's 41st
Annual Convention
SKAMANIA LODGE**



Join us for NAPO's 41st Annual Convention. Participate in setting NAPO's legislative priorities for the 116th Congress. Learn from presentations by prominent law enforcement figures about the latest developments in police policies and services and help determine NAPO's path forward by participating in the election of NAPO's Leadership.

The 41st Annual Convention will be held at Skamania Lodge, located in Stevenson, Washington, just 45 minutes from the Portland, Oregon International Airport. The resort sits on 175 acres of mountainous Pacific Northwest Forest overlooking the Columbia River Gorge. While at the lodge sit back and take in the beautiful views of the gorge or enjoy a day at the Waterleaf Spa. Looking for more adventure, the resort also offers: Golf, Hiking, Zipline and an Ariel Park!

When not attending the Convention Business Sessions the area offers something for everyone.... Whitewater rafting, fishing, kayaking, brew pubs, wineries, shopping in the historic City of Hood River and scenic drives showcasing some of the most spectacular waterfalls in the country!

[CLICK HERE FOR CONVENTION REGISTRATION](#)

Be Sure to Check out NAPO's website, www.napo.org, for additional information and special activities planned. Contact the NAPO office if you have any questions at 703-549-0775.

House Judiciary Committee Unanimously Approves Permanent Reauthorization of 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund

On June 12, in a victory for NAPO and law enforcement across the country, the House Judiciary Committee approved by unanimous voice vote both the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Reauthorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act (H.R. 1327).

After a powerful hearing the day before, during which the Committee heard from 9/11 first responders and survivors who are suffering from the consequences of 9/11-related illnesses as well as from 9/11 first responder advocate and former *The Daily Show* host, Jon Stewart, the Permanent Reauthorization of the 9/11 VCF Act will now head to the House floor with over 320 bipartisan cosponsors and unanimous, bipartisan approval of the House Judiciary Committee. The House is expected to vote on the bill prior to August recess, but with the momentum of the hearing and the markup, it will hopefully be taken up much sooner than that. The Senate is where the hard work will be, but if we get it passed by an overwhelming majority of the House, it will be hard for the Senate to ignore that.

This year will mark the 18th anniversary of the deadliest terrorist attack on our nation's soil. As we remember those who died on September 11, 2001, we also must recognize those we continue to lose as the lasting effects of that day make themselves known. We have lost more federal, state and local law enforcement officers from 9/11-related illnesses over the past 18 years than we lost on September 11, 2001. 9/11 responders and survivors are still battling serious health crises resulting from exposure to the toxins at Ground Zero.

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 these programs, reauthorized the World Trade Center Health Program until 2090 and reauthorized and fully-funded the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund (VCF) at \$7.3 billion for 5 years. Unfortunately, this has proven to not be enough. In September 2018, the Special Master of the VCF, Rupa Bhattacharyya, announced that given the significant increase in claims just from the last year alone, the Fund may not be able to fully compensate all claims.

On February 15, the Special Master declared that there is only \$2.375 billion left of the \$7.375 billion Congress appropriated in 2015 to compensate all pending and anticipated claims through December 18, 2020. With the dramatic increase in claims over the past several months, there is insufficient funding remaining in the VCF to fully pay all current and projected claims, and as a result, has decided to reduce payout amounts to ensure that all claims receive at least some level of award. As of February 25, 2019, pending and newly submitted claims will see their award amount reduced by *50 to 70 percent*.

While this announcement by the Special Master is alarming, the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund Act was drafted to address this possibility. There is language in the bill to require the Special Master to pay out the difference between the amount that the claimant would have received if sufficient funding was available at the time the award was calculated and the amount they ultimately received as a result of the reductions. That being said, the VCF award is often a lifeline for survivors and families struggling with loss and we cannot let this bill linger longer just because the families will be made whole eventually. It is imperative that the VCF is permanently reauthorized as soon as possible.

NAPO met with White House staff on the bill on June 21 and had a very productive meeting. We feel confident the President supports the legislation and will work with us to ensure the Senate passes a permanent reauthorization of the VCF. We will maintain open communication with the White House staff as this bill progresses through Congress, particularly when it gets to the Senate.

Thank you to all the organizations who sent letters in support of the Permanent Reauthorization of the 9/11 VCF Act. NAPO urges all of our member organizations to send in letters of support to show this is a national issue that Congress must address. NAPO will be leading member lobby days on July 16-17, focusing on Republican Senators. If your organization would like to participate, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

Bill Supporting Officer Mental Health & Wellness Approved by House Judiciary Committee

In addition to passing the Permanent Reauthorization of the 9/11 VCF Act on June 12, the House Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis (STOIC) Act (H.R. 2368). This important bill would reauthorize and revitalize a Department of Justice (DOJ) grant program for law enforcement officer family-support services that expired in 2000 and was last funded in 2005. In addition to the family-support services available under the grant, the STOIC Act will expand the grant program's eligible uses to better address the mental-health and support needs of law enforcement officers, especially as it relates to suicide prevention. The bill would specifically allow grant recipients to use funds to establish suicide-prevention programs and to support officers suffering stress and mental-health issues.

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. In 2018, there were at least 159 police officer suicides compared to 145 line of duty deaths. 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.

State and local law enforcement officers are our nation's first responders. They respond to our country's greatest tragedies as well as violent and abhorrent crimes that unfortunately occur with some frequency in our neighborhoods. 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.

The stresses and strains of the job not only affect officers' mental and physical wellbeing, but also the wellbeing of their family life. It is vital that we recognize the stress factors of the job and give officers and their families the resources they need to address their emotional and mental wellbeing. The STOIC Act will help ensure important support services are available for officers and their families.

We thank Representatives Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA) and Madeleine Dean (D-PA) for their leadership and support on this bill. We are working to get the House to quickly take it up under suspension of the rules and send it to the President's desk to be signed into law before the July 4 recess.

NAPO President Participates in Southwest Border Site Visit with DHS Officials

NAPO President Mick McHale participated in a Southwest Border Site Visit orchestrated by the White House and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of State and Local Law Enforcement from June 2 – 5. McHale was joined by the leadership of the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, the National Native American Law Enforcement Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major City Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs of America, the Police Executive Research Forum, the National District Attorneys Association, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. The goal of the site visit was to provide national law enforcement leaders with a firsthand experience of the challenges faced by the southwest border sheriffs and federal law enforcement. McHale and the other leaders were educated on the complexity of dealing with immigration issues, transnational crime, and public safety threats and concerns along the southwest border.

The group visited several sites along the southern border of Arizona. The meetings and tours were facilitated by Yuma County Sheriff's Office, Cochise County Sheriff's Office, Pima County Sheriff's Office, Yuma Sector Border Patrol, and the Tucson Sector Border Patrol. At the three border sites, the group was educated on the specific and varying issues faced by each port of entry and border sector:

United States Border Patrol – Yuma Sector: Border Patrol briefed the leaders on current operational demands, discussed limited resources and current immigration and drug trends. The Yuma Sector experienced a significant rise in the number of family units detained, which is particularly challenging in that this demographic cannot be immediately returned to their country of origin. USBP processing centers are not designed to house the current numbers of families and small children that they are encountering. Due to capacity issues and the ongoing humanitarian crisis at the border, Border Patrol is forced to identify and release eligible detainees until their immigration hearing.

United States Customs and Border Protection – Douglas Port of Entry: McHale and the leaders were given a tour of the intel and mission command center, the port of entry, and the processing and holding center. One of the major issues experienced at Douglas is congestion. Due to the demand, both commercial and passenger vehicles account for the major traffic congestion issues this port has been facing for years.

United States Customs and Border Protection – Tucson Sector: McHale and the leaders toured the Nogales Line Tour and Mariposa Crossing where they viewed enforcement challenges, border fencing, smuggler lookout points, and sub-terrain concerns and operations.

NAPO appreciates the opportunity to be part of the continuing conversation around immigration and homeland security and we look forward to continuing our work on it with the Administration.

House Accepts NAPO-Supported Amendments to DOJ Appropriations Package

As the House debated H.R. 3055, a Fiscal 2020 appropriations package that includes the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, several NAPO-supported amendments were passed to increase funding for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), and the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Program.

Representatives Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), Peter King (R-NY), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Lee Zeldin (R-NY) introduced an amendment to increase funding to the BVP Program by \$5 million to bring the appropriated amount up to its fully authorized level of \$30 million. Representative Doug Collins (R-GA) sponsored an amendment to appropriate \$20 million to PSN, which was appropriated no funding by the House Appropriations Committee. In Fiscal 2019, the Program received \$50 million, its fully authorized level. Representative Raul Ruiz (D-CA) introduced an amendment to increase funding for the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Program by \$2 million, bringing the total appropriations for Fiscal 2020 to \$4 million. This Program created by the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act in 2018 and was appropriated \$2 million to start in Fiscal 2019. While \$4 million is not the funding level we want for this program, NAPO supports any addition funding for officer peer mentoring programs.

The passage of these amendments is a victory for NAPO and we will continue to put pressure on Congressional appropriators to fund our priority grant programs at their highest levels. NAPO thanks Representatives Pascrell, King, Fitzpatrick, Zeldin, Collins and Ruiz for their support of the law enforcement community.

Cadillac Tax Update: Bill to Repeal Could Hit House Floor by August

As of June 24, the Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act (H.R. 748), which would repeal the 40 percent excise tax (“Cadillac Tax”) on employer-sponsored health plans, has an astounding 356 bipartisan cosponsors. Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT), the bill’s sponsor, filed a motion to add the bill to the consensus calendar, which requires that Speaker Pelosi bring the bill up for a vote as-is after 25 legislative days. That will have the bill being voted on before the August Recess. The consensus calendar is new this Congress and was established in response to rank-and-file members’ frustration that legislation with significant, broad bipartisan support could

languish in Committee without any action. In order to get on the consensus calendar, the bill must have 290 cosponsors and must not have been reported by the Committee of jurisdiction (in this case, the Ways and Means Committee).

Representative Richard Neal (D-MA), Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, became the 290th cosponsor, which was done on purpose and with significance to show that this legislation has his support and that of his Committee. Representative Courtney and Chairman Neal are working with House leadership on how it will take up legislation. Having House leadership on board and supportive of this legislation moving forward is necessary as this legislation will most likely have to be paid for and will not get passed without an offset or funding source to make up for the budget loss.

356 cosponsors is 82 percent of the House. Such substantial support cannot be ignored or placated without a full vote on the legislation. The only way for the bill to be taken off the consensus calendar is to have the Ways and Means Committee mark it up. That would buy House leadership more time, but given the Committee's support for the bill, we are working to ensure that the bill goes straight to the floor for a vote. NAPO will keep our members updated on the status of this important bill.

NAPO on the Hill: House Law Enforcement Caucus

Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), the co-chair of the House Law Enforcement Caucus, has new staff leading the work for his office on behalf of the Caucus. NAPO met with the staff to introduce ourselves and to discuss our priority legislation for this Congress.

Rep. Pascrell is the sponsor or cosponsor of many of our top priority legislation, including the permanent reauthorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) Grant Program, which was signed into law last month, the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Reauthorization of the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund Act, and the Protecting America's First Responders Act. We thanked him for his boss's leadership and support on these vital bills and discussed several other issues for which we would like the Representative's support.

One of NAPO's continued top priorities is the Protect and Serve Act, which will enhance officer safety by increasing penalties for the murder, attempted murder, or assault of state and local law enforcement officers. This bill is sponsored by the other co-chair of the House Law Enforcement Caucus, Rep. John Rutherford (R-FL), and we would like to see Rep. Pascrell cosponsor it and make it a Caucus-supported bill as increased protections for officers should be its top priority.

We also raised the Supporting and Treating Offices in Crisis (STOIC) Act and urged the Representative to support the bill. The more cosponsors on the bill, the better chance we have of it being quickly taken up by the House.

We look forward to our continued partnership with Rep. Pascrell and the Law Enforcement Caucus. If you have any questions about NAPO's meetings on the Hill or the issues addressed, please contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org.

If you have any questions about the issues or legislation discussed in this issue of the Washington Report, contact Andy Edmiston at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0775. 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.