



The Washington Report

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

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NAPO Participates in Q&A Session on Law Enforcement Accreditation Standards

NAPO participated in a question and answer session hosted by the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) regarding draft national accreditation standards, as required by Section 19 of President Biden's Executive Order on Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety. The COPS Office has been tasked with developing the standards independent credentialing bodies must consider, as well as standards they should consider, when accrediting law enforcement agencies. A law enforcement agency accredited under different criteria will not be considered accredited by the DOJ.

As part of the stakeholder consultation requirement of the Executive Order, the COPS Office shared initial draft accreditation standards with NAPO and held a Q&A discussion to answer any questions before we submit formal comments, feedback, and recommendations on the standards. The Executive Order is fairly prescriptive with what the accreditation standards must include so there is little wiggle room for what should or should not be considered by accrediting agencies. Where we can make a difference is in how the specific standards are written, implemented, and evaluated.

The Executive Order states that the national credentialing standards must further the policies laid out in sections 3 (Hiring, Recruitment, and Retention), 4 (Supporting Office Wellness), 7 (Banning Chokeholds and Carotid Restraints), 8 (Use of Force Standards), 9 (Anti-Bias Training and Guidance), and 10 (Restricting No-Knock Entries). While these issues make up the bulk of the *required* draft standards agencies must meet in order to be accredited, there are many extraneous standards included that a credentialing body *should* consider when accrediting a law enforcement agency. These additional standards are not mandated by the Executive Order.

While NAPO will be submitting official comments on the draft standards, during the Q&A session, we highlighted the issues where the guidelines deviate from current legal doctrine and standards and infringed upon officer rights, including possibly their collective bargaining rights, and areas where the guidelines may be difficult to implement.

We appreciate the ability to be a part of this process and to provide our input on national accrediting standards to the COPS Office. NAPO takes our seat at the table very seriously and we will continue to work with the Administration to ensure officers rights and safety are protected as the various aspects of the Order gets implemented.

NAPO Shares Concerns with U.S. District Court Nominee with Senate Judiciary Committee

NAPO sent [a letter](#) to the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 24 expressing our serious concerns with the nomination of Nusrat J. Choudhury to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York. The Committee is scheduled to hold a nomination hearing for Ms. Choudhury on February 2.

In 2015, a tweet stating that the killing of unarmed Black men by police “happens every day” in America was attributed to Ms. Choudhury. During her nomination hearing last year, she did not disavow the tweet, but stated that it was made in her role as an “advocate”. The fact that it took two weeks after the hearing for her to completely disavow the statement is incredibly concerning, particularly for someone seeking to be a U.S. District Judge. Further, while she has renounced the statement, she has not condemned it for being the salacious falsehood that it is. This shows an anti-police bias that would certainly cloud her decision making as a judge and not only hamper her relationship with the law enforcement community but also law enforcement’s relationship with the communities they serve.

As a private citizen, our Constitution affords Ms. Choudhury the right to hold and express these views. However, it is profoundly concerning to us that a nominee to be U.S. District Judge has harbored such an openly hostile and defamatory view of police.

We want to move forward with improving our relationship with our communities and enhance their trust in our profession, but if such sentiments are held by high-ranking members of our judicial system, this will be difficult to do. The men and women of the law enforcement community put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect their communities and they deserve support and respect from every level of our judicial system.

ONDCP Meeting on 2023 National Drug Control Strategy

NAPO participated in a meeting with the Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Dr. Rahul Gupta, and other national law enforcement organizations, to discuss the 2023 National Drug Control Strategy and for ONDCP to get an understanding of the most pressing drug-related issues facing the law enforcement community.

ONDCP’s priorities for this year include building treatment infrastructure and disrupting the illicit substances supply chain. Many on the call, including NAPO, believe that the federal government should focus not just on points of entry into the country, but also across the entire southern border where illicit drugs, including fentanyl, are coming into the country in a myriad of ways. This includes drug enforcement, collaboration with state and local law enforcement, and data sharing across federal, state and local levels of what is happening at the border.

Dr. Gupta also stated that ONDCP supports the permanent scheduling of fentanyl as a Schedule 1 Drug. This is something NAPO has long been calling for, but Congress continues to settle for short-term extensions of the scheduling, the latest being two years in length. The classification of fentanyl as a Schedule 1 substance is necessary for all law enforcement actions on fentanyl, allowing law enforcement to prosecute criminals who make and distribute the drug.

NAPO appreciates being engaged with ONDCP as state and local law enforcement are on the front lines of our nation’s fight against illegal drugs. ONDCP is currently taking input for its 2024 National Drug Control

Strategy and if any NAPO member organizations have recommendations they would like to see be considered, please contact NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs at aedmiston@napo.org.

New COPS Office Director Announced

The Department of Justice announced that Colonel Hugh Clements Jr. will be the next director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). Colonel Clements is a 40-year veteran of the Providence (Rhode Island) Police Department, where he started as a patrol officer and eventually rose through the ranks to be named Chief of the Department in 2012 and promoted to the rank of Colonel. Additionally, from what we have discovered, he also enjoyed a good working relationship with the union representing the Department's rank-and-file officers.

NAPO has supported the COPS Office since its inception in 1994, particularly the COPS Hiring Program, as a vital resource for state and local law enforcement. 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, the last two of promote officer mental wellness and peer mentoring.

NAPO appreciates the support of the COPS Office and the work that we do with them to support our rank and file officers. We look forward to working with Colonel Clements to further our COPS Program priorities.

NAPO on the Hill: NAPO Priorities for the 118th Congress

As it is the start of a new Congress, NAPO is working on getting our priority legislation reintroduced. To date, the Thin Blue Line Act (H.R. 130), the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), the Qualified Immunity Act (H.R. 233), the SERVE Our Communities Act (H.R. 304), the Back the Blue Act (H.R. 355), the Fighting PTSD Act (H.R. 472), and the LEOSA Reform Act (H.R. 355) have been reintroduced. We are working to reintroduce the Public Safety Retirees Healthcare Protection Act, the Project Safe Neighborhoods Reauthorization Act, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, the Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act, the Invest to Protect Act, and the Recruit and Retain Act in the coming weeks.

In addition to working with the sponsors of our priority bills to get them reintroduced, we met with Senator Charles Grassley's (R-IA) judiciary staff regarding NAPO's priorities for the Committee this Congress. These priorities include, but are not limited to, increased protections for officers, the Fighting PTSD Act, the Invest to Protect Act, and policies to combat the effects of bail reform, including the SERVE Our Communities Act and the Prosecutors Need to Prosecute Act. Senator Grassley is the sponsor of both the Fighting PTSD Act and the Invest to Protect Act and we look forward to working with him to see these two bills moved across the finish line.

We also met with Senator Catherine Cortez Masto's (D-NV) staff and Congressman Josh Gottheimer's (D-NJ) staff on separate occasions to discuss the Invest to Protect Act, which they both championed last Congress. We are working with all the sponsors of this important bill to ensure we have a bill that will gain strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. The Invest to Protect Act would create a broad grant program through the Department of Justice (DOJ) specifically for small state, local or tribal law enforcement agencies that will give them resources to train their officers, provide mental health resources for their officers, and retain and hire officers. A small agency is defined as one that employs 125 sworn law enforcement officers or less.

We met with Congressman Ralph Norman's (R-SC) new law enforcement staff to thank them for the Congressman's efforts to get the Putting First Responders First Act included and passed as part of the Fiscal 2023 omnibus and to discuss our legislative priorities for the Congress. The Putting First Responders First Act makes disability-related compensation tax free through retirement for first responders.

As our priority legislation continues to be introduced, NAPO is reaching out to Senators and Representatives to ask them to cosponsor these important bills and support our priorities this Congress.

NAPO-Backed LEOSA Reform Act Reintroduced

NAPO priority legislation, the LEOSA Reform Act, H.R. 354, was reintroduced this Congress by Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE).

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. Since its enactment, we have pushed for and supported several amendments to improve the law to ensure that it is easily, fairly and broadly implemented across the country. However, today, qualified off-duty, and retired officers continue to encounter unnecessary roadblocks when exercising their legal right to carry a firearm.

We worked with Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE) to introduce the LEOSA Reform Act in the 116th Congress to address specific issues that well-qualified active and retired law enforcement officers are facing when exercising their right to protect themselves and others under the law. The important bill would expand the areas qualified current or retired officers are allowed to carry a firearm, including on a Gun Free School Zone; on state, local and private property otherwise open to the public; and in certain federal facilities. It will allow qualified officers and retired officers to carry an ammunition magazine of any capacity that is not prohibited by federal law. Importantly, it will reform qualifications standards to alleviate undue burdens for those carrying under LEOSA.

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.

NAPO thanks Congressman Bacon for his strong and continued support of the law enforcement community, and NAPO looks forward to working with him to pass the LEOSA Reform Act.

Back the Blue Act Reintroduced

Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE) has reintroduced the Back the Blue Act, H.R. 355, which is a priority for NAPO. Many of our members work for jurisdictions that receive federal funding and this legislation will help to bring federal resources to bear in the prosecution of those who attempt to murder or murder any of these officers. In addition to creating new federal crimes for violence against police officers, the bill would also establish a new federal crime for interstate flight to avoid prosecution for killing, attempting to kill, or conspiring to kill a federally funded public safety officer. It would also expressly allow all judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials, subject to limited regulations, to carry firearms into all federal

facilities, federal courts, and in jurisdictions where the carrying of such weapons is otherwise prohibited by law.

NAPO has long supported enacting new federal criminal provisions to address (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 Departments of Justice or Homeland Security; 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. The Back the Blue Act would be a significant step towards increasing federal protections for state and local law enforcement, who are the front line in keeping our nation and our communities safe.

We thank Congressman Bacon for his dedication to reintroducing this critical piece of legislation. We look forward to working with him to see it passed into law.

NAPO Endorsed Fighting PTSD Act Reintroduced

NAPO once again pledged our support for the Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Act, H.R. 472, reintroduced by Congressman David Joyce (R-OH).

With the enactment of the Public Safety Officer Support Act ([PL 117-172](#)), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is now a line of duty injury under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program. Officers who suffer from PTSD and those who take or attempt to take their own life as a result of on-duty trauma are now eligible under the program. Further, the PSOB Program will presume that trauma-linked suicides are a result of job duties in certain circumstances, such as a mass casualty event, where there is evidence that PTSD would be caused by the trauma.

The Fighting PTSD Act compliments the Public Safety Officer Support Act by addressing PTSD before it gets to the point where an officer is completely debilitated by it or contemplates suicide. The bill recognizes the prevalence of PTSD within the public safety profession and the need to address PTSD and acute stress disorder among officers to make certain they get the treatment and help they need. This legislation is an important first step to giving all officers access to confidential, state-of-the-art treatments for PTSD and acute stress disorder. By recognizing the instances of these disorders within the profession and guaranteeing treatments and resource are widely available, we can work to ensure that suicide will no longer be one of the top killers of public safety officers.

We are working with Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) to reintroduce the Senate version of this bill, which passed the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate by unanimous consent in the 117th Congress.

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.