



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON
Executive Director

June 14, 2013

The Honorable Tom Coburn
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), representing 241,000 rank-and-file officers from across the United States, I am writing to you to express concern about your opposition to the National Blue Alert Act of 2013 (S.357), also known as the "Blue Alert" system, which would disseminate information when law enforcement officers are injured or killed in the line of duty.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), on average, one law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty somewhere in the United States every 57 hours. Moreover, preliminary data from the NLEOMF indicates a 14% increase in the number of officer fatalities from June 2012 to June 2013. The National Blue Alert Act of 2013 will help to create a nationwide alert system to quickly identify and apprehend suspects when a law enforcement officer is injured or killed in the line of duty.

Law enforcement officer assaults, injuries, and deaths have increased sharply in recent years. The "Blue Alert" system would disseminate information notifying law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public that a suspect is wanted in connection with an attack on a law enforcement officer to assist with the apprehension of the criminal. Dissemination of important, time-sensitive information will ensure that those who commit offenses against law enforcement officers are quickly brought to justice.

The "Blue Alert" system has been extremely effective at the state level. For example, the system contributed to the capture of Christopher Dorner, a former Los Angeles Police Department police officer, who was charged in connection with a series of shooting attacks on police officers and their families. Also, the "Blue Alert" system led to the capture of three siblings in Colorado, known as the "Dougherty Gang," who were wanted for the shooting of a Zephyrhills police officer. However, as of today, only eighteen states have Blue Alert networks at place, which leaves officers and communities at great risk. An integrated, nationwide "Blue Alert" system would save lives and bring fugitive suspects to justice.

The “National Blue Alert System” is an invaluable resource that protects our citizens by alerting them of dangerous criminals and assists law enforcement with bringing to justice criminals who harm America’s law enforcement officers. The creation and implementation of a “Blue Alert” system will give law enforcement agencies the necessary tools to expedite the apprehension of criminals who harm officers and restore safety to the community.

We hope that you will reconsider your position, as NAPO strongly believes this legislation is essential to assist the law enforcement community with quickly apprehending suspects and bringing them to justice before they can do anymore harm. Creating a nationwide system that responds to criminal action against law enforcement officers will ensure the safety of the officers and the public they protect.

We appreciate your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director