



The Washington Report

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

December 16, 2013

NAPO WASHINGTON REPORT

Senate Finance Committee Approves Excellence in Mental Health Act

On December 12, 2013, the Senate Finance Committee approved the bipartisan Excellence in Mental Health Act, authored by **Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)** and **Roy Blunt (R-MO)**, to expand access to community mental health services and strengthen the quality of care provided. The bill was included as an amendment to the so-called "doc fix" (SGR) bill that permanently reforms the way doctors are reimbursed by Medicare. The version of the Excellence in Mental Health Act voted for in committee would establish pilot programs in ten states to strengthen and improve access to care.

The Excellence in Mental Health Act establishes criteria for certified community behavioral health clinics to ensure providers cover a broad range of mental health services - including 24-hour crisis care, increased integration of physical, mental, and substance abuse treatment so they are treated simultaneously rather than separately, and expanded support for families of people living with mental health issues. Senator Stabenow noted: "Strengthening mental health services isn't partisan. It is an important issue that touches all of our families in some way...Our bipartisan bill expands access to care and improves quality of care so people living with mental illness can get the treatment they need. Instead of merely talking about this issue in the wake of tragedies, it is time for Congress to finally take action."

NAPO signed-on to a letter of support for the Excellence in Mental Health Act in May 2013, and has maintained close contact with Senator Stabenow and her staff to ensure the bill is passed. This legislation is critical to expanding access to community behavioral health centers and improving the quality of mental health and substance use treatment for all Americans.

Source

"Stabenow-Blunt Excellence in Mental Health Act Adopted as Amendment in Senate Finance Committee." *Debbie Stabenow: U.S. Senator (Michigan)*. U.S. Senate, 12 Dec. 2013. Web. 13 Dec. 2013.
<http://www.stabenow.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=1219>.

Senator Coons Introduces the Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act of 2013

Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and **Roy Blunt (R-MO)**, co-chairs of the Senate Law Enforcement Caucus, and **Senators Jeff Sessions (R-AL)** and **Mazie Hirono (D-HI)** introduced bipartisan legislation December 10, 2013, to reauthorize the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA), which provides funding for Children's Advocacy Centers that serve child victims of violent crimes and help law enforcement hold perpetrators accountable. Though the success of

these federal-state and public-private partnerships have earned them broad bipartisan support, Congressional authorization for Children's Advocacy Centers lapsed in 2005, and most recently the President's proposed budgets for 2013 and 2014 have zeroed out federal funding. The VOCAA Reauthorization Act of 2013 would restore funding for Children's Advocacy Centers and strengthen oversight of this critical program.

Senator Coons noted: "When a child is the victim of physical or sexual abuse, his or her life will never be the same...Seeking justice should be a part of the healing process – not a source of further trauma. Children's Advocacy Centers provide a safe, supportive space for young victims and help law enforcement officers bring perpetrators to justice faster, more effectively, and at a lower cost. These facilities are a critical asset to law enforcement, to our criminal justice system, and to the children in our community who have been the victims of truly horrific crimes."

The VOCAA Reauthorization Act of 2013 would increase authorization levels for Children's Advocacy Centers for the first time since the VOCAA was enacted in 1990. Acknowledging current fiscal constraints, this moderate increase, from \$20 million to \$22.5 million, is still below an amount that would keep pace with inflation and population growth. The reauthorization would also strengthen the programs through enhanced accountability provisions, non-profit requirements, and limitations on conference expenditures.

[NAPO pledged our support for VOCAA in November 2013, and is committed to ensuring the passage of this important piece of legislation.](#)

Source

"U.S. Senator Chris Coons of Delaware." *US Senator Christopher Coons*. U.S. Senate, 11 Dec. 213. Web. 13 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.coons.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/release/senators-introduce-bill-to-save-advocacy-centers-for-victims-of-child-abuse>>.

NAPO Meets with Senator Murphy to Discuss the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act

On December 12, 2013, NAPO joined other stakeholders in a meeting with House Energy & Commerce Oversight Subcommittee **Chairman Tim Murphy (R-PA)** and his staff to discuss the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

The Helping Families In Mental Health Crisis Act focuses programs and resources on psychiatric care for patients and families most in need of services by increasing inpatient and outpatient treatment options; clarifying standards used to commit an individual to medical care; updating the existing legal framework to help families and physicians communicate during a crisis; and moving toward data-driven, evidence-based models of care so treatment is accessed not through the criminal justice system, but the healthcare system.

The legislation is the culmination of Rep. Murphy's Subcommittee investigation of mental health funding, programs, and policies. Chairman Murphy included the reauthorization of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) in his bill. The bill reauthorizes mental health courts and requires the Department of Justice to collect more data on interactions between the police and the mentally ill. The bill also authorizes Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) to be used for mental health training of law enforcement and corrections officers.

NAPO is currently reviewing Chairman Murphy's legislation, and will provide updates on the status of the bill as they become available.

Source

"Latest News." *Congressman Tim Murphy*. U.S. House of Representatives, 12 Dec. 2013. Web. 13 Dec. 2013. <<http://murphy.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=250>>.

NAPO Briefing on Capitol Hill - Driver's Privacy Protection Act & Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act

Over the past week, NAPO has met with staffers for the following members of the House Judiciary Committee: **Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ)**, **Congressman Raúl Labrador (R-ID)**, and **Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA)**. NAPO used each of the meetings to discuss our proposal to modify the recent amendment to the Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) and request support for the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act.

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 damages in the amount of \$2,500 for each time a record was accessed, 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 each of 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 \$2,500 penalty for a violation of this act, as well as adding a statement that explains there must be repeated disregard of this law for action to be taken. 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 also discussed the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act, (sponsored by Congressman Michael Capuano (D-MA)), with each of the staffers. This legislation would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 by adding campus police officers to the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. This bill would define a "campus police officer" as a police officer who is authorized to enforce the criminal laws and is employed by an institution of higher education. The change would be retroactive to April 15, 2013 - the date of the Boston bombings. NAPO has worked closely with Congressman Capuano and his staff on efforts to add cosponsors to this legislation, currently supported by the entire Massachusetts delegation, and plans to continue these efforts to ensure the passage of this important bill.

NAPO will continue to aggressively lobby members of Congress to gain support for our proposed language changes to the DPPA amendment, as well as garner additional cosponsors to support the Officer Sean Collier Campus Police Recognition Act. We will keep our members updated on the status of these initiatives.

If you have examples of law enforcement departments that have been negatively impacted by the most recent DPPA amendment, please contact Melissa Nee at:
mnee@napo.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

YOUR NOMINATIONS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE FOR TOP COPS®

This year will mark the 21st year NAPO has produced the TOP COPS Awards®. The ceremony will take place on Monday, May 12, 2014, again coinciding with Police Week. Over the next few months I will be asking for your assistance in three major areas in which you, our members, can help to ensure the success of TOP COPS®: nominations, sponsorships, and show attendance. Today, I want to ask for your assistance with the first and most fundamental component, nominations.

TOP COPS® is unique in that it is a peer nominated award. However, one of the greatest struggles we have faced in the past is getting the nomination form out to officers nationwide. I am asking you to assist us in making this happen. **It is our goal this year to see all 50 states represented with a nominee.** While we appreciate and welcome nominations from the executive level, we would really like to see the nomination form circulated among *your* members.

The nomination form can be downloaded from the NAPO website, www.napo.org, and if need be, we would also be happy to email you the form. Just send us an email to info@napo.org with your request. Please feel free to duplicate and post it anywhere you feel it is appropriate. We would especially like to see forms posted in association offices and departments with the hope that your members will feel inclined to nominate the great cases/officers they have come into contact with over the past year. I would also like to ask you to consider including the nomination form, on your website, or as a hand out at your next meeting.

If you have other thoughts or ideas as to how to get the word out about this most worthwhile event, please let us know. With your help and partnership, I know that TOP COPS® will be a tremendous success!

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.