



The Washington Report

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

September 20, 2024

NAPO Victory! H.R. 82 Discharge Petition Hits 218 Signatures

On September 19, the discharge petition for H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, hit the necessary [218 signatures](#) needed to force a vote on this important bill. The petition is now closed and there is now a seven legislative day waiting period after which the bill's sponsors, Representatives Garret Graves (R-LA) or Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), can call it to the floor for a vote. Speaker Johnson then has two legislative days to schedule the vote. Timing will be everything as the House is currently focused on funding the federal government before time runs out on September 30 and Congress is set to adjourn for an extended recess through Election Day.

We have never been this close to having a vote on the Social Security Fairness Act in the 40 years NAPO has been fighting for its passage. NAPO thanks every [Member of Congress who signed on to the discharge petition](#) for their support and thank you to all our members whose advocacy and efforts helped us make this happen. Please join us in thanking your Representatives who supported our effort and signed the petition. It is with their steadfast support that we will ultimately get H.R. 82 passed. Signing the discharge petition does not mandate the Representative vote in favor of the bill and there are still many obstacles that could get in the way of final passage of the bill. However, the momentum is ours and we will not stop until the Social Security Fairness Act is signed into law.

The morning of the 19th, NAPO participated in a press conference hosted by Representatives Garret Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) to draw attention to their discharge petition for H.R. 82. NAPO Executive Board Member and President of the New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association (NJSPBA) Peter Andreyev spoke on behalf of NAPO at the press conference ([minute 10:42](#)). Andreyev was joined at the press conference by NJSPBA Vice President and NAPO Sergeant-at-Arms Keith Curry, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson, and NAPO Governmental Affairs Director Andy Edmiston. The more than 31,000 law enforcement and correctional officers who are members of the NJSPBA are each impacted by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).

For over 40 years, the GPO and WEP have been harming the retirement security of our nation's public safety officers by taking away hard-earned, and much needed benefits simply because they chose a public service profession that mandates early retirement. An estimated 9 out of 10 public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit. Those impacted by the WEP see their Social Security benefit reduced by nearly \$587 per month.

At the press conference, Andreyev asked that Members of Congress do not turn their backs on these public servants now under the veil of "cost concerns" and urged them to sign the discharge petition. The so-called

cost of the repeal of the GPO and WEP is the money that is being unfairly stolen from public servants' Social Security retirement benefits over the next ten years.

H.R. 82 currently has [327 bipartisan cosponsors](#) and the Senate companion, S. 597, has [62 cosponsors](#), enough support to pass the bill by a strong bipartisan majority in both Chambers if every cosponsor votes for the bill.

We will keep you updated on next steps for the bill. Please contact Andy Edmiston, NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0775 if you have any questions. Thank you again for your efforts to make this discharge petition a success!

Register Today for NAPO's 2024 Fall Seminar ***Last Chance to Get the NAPO Room Rate!***

October 20 – 22, 2024
Omni Hotel ~ Corpus Christi, Texas

www.napo.org/fall24

[Register now](#) for NAPO's 2024 Fall Seminar in Corpus Christi, Texas, which will focus on media relations and officer mental health and wellness. Special thanks to Scott Leeton and the Corpus Christi Police Officers Association for hosting NAPO!

This important Seminar will focus on:

- How to effectively communicate with the press when responding to use of force and controversial issues. Participate in mock interviews and press conferences with media experts from television, print and public relations personal. Immediate feedback from the experts will help NAPO members be better prepared to deal with the media in future controversial cases.
- Officer Health & Wellness

Participants will also hear from retired Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Special Agents in Charge Steve Murphy and Javier Peña, who were sent to dismantle the cartels and take down Pablo Escobar and are the inspiration for the hit TV show *Narcos*.

The Omni Hotel, located on the Corpus Christi Bay, offers spectacular views of the Bay, a fitness center with an outdoor pool, and the famous rooftop Republic of Texas Bar & Grill. The Hotel is two blocks from downtown's shopping, restaurants & bars and just 15 minutes to the Airport. The Hotel offers complimentary airport shuttle service.

Hotel reservations must be made by September 27 to guarantee a room and the NAPO room rate!

Information regarding hotel reservations, airline discounts and the agenda are also included [here](#). Both [online](#) and [mail-in](#) registration are available.

NAPO Priority Amendment Included in Senate NDAA

In a victory for NAPO, the Senate Armed Services Committee released its version of the Fiscal 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) on September 20, which includes one of NAPO's priority amendments. While we pushed for the inclusion of several amendments with Senate leadership and the leadership of the Armed Services Committees, the inclusion of the Law Enforcement and Victim Support Act amendment, offered by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Jon Ossoff (D-GA) is a significant victory.

The Law Enforcement and Victim Support Act, offered by Senators John Cornyn and Jon Ossoff, is comprised of nine bills that passed unanimously out of the Senate, including several priority bills for law enforcement: the Fighting PTSD Act, the American Law Enforcement SAVER Act, Project Safe Neighborhoods Reauthorization Act, the Strong Communities Act, and Project Safe Childhood Act. These bills would help protect the mental health and physical wellbeing of law enforcement officers, provide resources to address the recruitment crisis the profession is facing, and provide departments tools to fight violent crime and protect our innocent children from exploitation.

Fighting PTSD Act: Would require the Attorney General to propose a program, based on best practices, for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder available to public safety officers.

Project Safe Neighborhoods Reauthorization Act: Would reauthorize the Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN) Program for five years and expand the allowable uses of the grant funding to include overtime costs for officers and the hiring of crime analysts and law enforcement assistants to aid agencies participating in the program.

Strong Communities Act: Would allow for COPS Hiring Program funds to be used to pay for local law enforcement recruits to attend schools or academies if the recruits agree to live in the communities in which they serve.

American Law Enforcement SAVER Act: Would establish baseline standards for trauma kits purchased through the DOJ's Byrne JAG Program, helping to ensure all officers have access to effective trauma kits that can save lives.

Project Safe Childhood Act: Would reauthorize and update the Project Safe Childhood initiative to modernize how online child exploitation crimes are investigated and prosecuted and it would make improvements to how federal prosecutors and federal, state, and local law enforcement work together and use new technology to go after predators. It would reauthorize the program for five years at \$62 million per year.

Given the lack of legislative days remaining in the year, the Senate will not vote on its version of the FY 25 NDAA, but rather use it for informal negotiations with the House. The goal is to have a final bill for both chambers to vote on in the lame duck session after the November election. NAPO will work to ensure the Law Enforcement and Victim Support Act, as well as the Lifesaving Gear for Police Act (included in the House NDAA), are included in the final FY25 NDAA.

President Announces Executive Action on De Minimis Loophole

For the past two years, NAPO has increasingly engaged in the effort to close the de minimis trade loophole as part of our effort to ensure that federal, state, and local law enforcement has every resource, support, and

tool available to fight the spread of fentanyl and other deadly opioids in our communities. The de minimis loophole allows packages valued at less than \$800 to enter the U.S. through the international mail system without facing any taxes, fees, or inspection. As a result, this cripples domestic manufacturers and workers, undermines retailers, strains law enforcement resources, and facilitates the movement of illegal and dangerous products and illicit drugs, particularly fentanyl and its precursors, into the country.

Fentanyl is now the drug most associated with overdoses in the United States. This deadly poison is being mixed with other illicit drugs, hidden in counterfeit drugs, and being peddled at alarmingly high rates to our nation's youth. 7 out of 10 counterfeit prescription drugs seized by law enforcement in the last year were laced with a deadly amount fentanyl.

American law enforcement is fighting a losing battle if Chinese drug smugglers can continue to circumvent our trade laws and ship hundreds of thousands of packages of fentanyl directly into our country with the click of a button. The de minimis loophole is severely exacerbating the opioid crisis and contributing to deaths in our country by allowing fentanyl, other illegal opioids, and related contraband to enter our market duty free and largely uninspected.

After sending letters to the President and Administration urging executive action to close the de minimis loophole (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), NAPO was pleased to see the Administration announce on September 13 that it is taking action to reform de minimis. NAPO also participated in a press conference on September 11, hosted by Representatives Rosa De Lauro (D-CT), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), and Tom Suozzi (D-NY), to promote a letter to the President they led and was signed by 126 members of Congress, urging the President to take executive action and close the de minimis loophole.

With its announcement, the White House is not, unfortunately, using executive action to close the loophole, but rather it is proposing regulations to reduce the number of packages eligible for de minimis and to increase the information that must be provided with these shipments to give Customs and Border Protection (CBP) a better understanding of what is coming in and who is shipping it.

NAPO President Mick McHale issued the following statement regarding the Administration's announcement it is taking executive action on de minimis reform:

Law enforcement is battling the trafficking of illegal narcotics on multiple fronts, including the international mail system. The de minimis loophole is severely exacerbating the opioid crisis by allowing fentanyl and other illegal opioids to enter our country largely uninspected. Substantial reform, or the closing of this trade loophole altogether, is necessary to remove significant fentanyl trafficking routes into this country and is essential to any national strategy to end the fentanyl crisis. NAPO appreciates this first step by the Administration to limit the number of packages coming in through the de minimis environment and we agree that comprehensive reform is immediately required as more must be done to ensure the de minimis trade exemption will no longer be a gateway for illicit drugs and goods to cross our borders. We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to fully close this loophole given the urgency of the crisis.

House Passes DETECT Fentanyl & Xylazine Act

In a victory for NAPO, the House passed the DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act (H.R. 8663) on September 9 by voice vote. This bipartisan bill, sponsored by Representative Nick LaLota (R-NY), would authorize the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to conduct research and development, testing, and

evaluation on equipment that would help law enforcement better detect fentanyl, xylazine, and other illicit drugs.

The DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act would create a new statutory responsibility for DHS's Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) to carry out research and development (R&D) to improve the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of drug detection equipment and reference libraries used by federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to identify unknown substances.

Fentanyl, particularly illicitly manufactured fentanyl, xylazine and other synthetic drugs are having deadly consequences on communities across the country, both big and small. Because illicit fentanyl is so powerful — just a few salt-sized grains can kill an adult — small amounts go a long way for drug traffickers. These relatively small and potent amounts mean fentanyl is difficult and hazardous to detect, making it easy to traffic and a danger to those trying to interdict it. The DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act would give law enforcement the tools necessary to safely detect and crack down on the trafficking of fentanyl and related opioids.

The Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee approved the Senate version of the bill (S. 4419), sponsored by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Jon Ossoff (D-GA), on September 18. We are working with Senators Cornyn and Ossoff and Senate leadership to quickly move this important bill by voice vote and send it to the President's desk to be signed into law.

NAPO Priority Bill to Restore Law Enforcement Access to Surplus Military Equipment Reintroduced

NAPO worked closely with Representative Michael Waltz (R-FL) on the reintroduction of the Lifesaving Gear for Police Act of 2024, a priority bill for us that would restore state and local law enforcement's unfettered access to surplus military equipment through the Department of Defense's 1033 Program and Departments of Justice and Homeland Security grant programs. Representative Jared Moskowitz (D-FL) is the lead Democrat on the bill, which was introduced with 38 bipartisan original cosponsors.

President Biden's 2022 police reform Executive Order reinstated the restrictions that were put in place by President Obama's 2015 Executive Order on what equipment state and local law enforcement could acquire through the 1033 Program and how that equipment must be used. Those restrictions were immediately reestablished and expanded for the 1033 Program as well as for Department of Homeland Security and Justice Department grants, effectively eliminating state and local law enforcement's access to needed surplus federal equipment.

Programs like the 1033 Program have been vital resources in allowing state and local law enforcement to acquire items used in search and rescue operations, disaster response, and active shooter situations that they otherwise would not be able to afford. This equipment has not led to the "militarization" of police, but rather has proven to be essential not only in protecting communities against violent criminals, but also in responding to natural disasters, which are unfortunately increasing in frequency.

The Lifesaving Gear for Police Act of 2024 will overturn the Executive Order, prohibit this or any future President from implementing new restrictions without an act of Congress, and require the Administration to return equipment that it has recalled — at no expense to local police.

The legitimate and well-demonstrated needs of officers are being overlooked due to the optics of law enforcement agencies obtaining this equipment from the federal government. NAPO thanks Congressman Waltz for his continued support and for his efforts to pass this bill in any way possible, including securing it as an amendment in the House-passed NDAA.

NAPO Endorses Bill to Crack Down on Financial Scams

Empowering Law Enforcement to Combat Financial Fraud Act (H.R. 9480), introduced by Representatives Zach Nunn (R-IA), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), and Scott Fitzgerald (R-WI), which will help support law enforcement investigations into financial scams against retirees.

Law enforcement's duty is to serve and to protect our communities from all crime, including cybercrime. The rate of cybercrime, particularly financial scams, has jumped significantly and law enforcement needs every tool available to help identify cybercriminals and protect victims. The Empowering Law Enforcement to Combat Financial Fraud Act will help departments across the nation better prevent, investigate, and prosecute these crimes.

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