

## Washington, D.C. Trip 2023

The Iowa State Police Association (ISPA) was represented in Washington, D.C., during National Police Week, May 14-21, 2023. President Becki Sammons, Second Vice President Fred Lepley, along with myself, went to D.C. to honor the fallen officers and lobby for Iowa Law Enforcement. We arrived in Washington on May 10 so we could attend the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) legislative day on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> President Sammons attended the NAPO breakfast, listened to NAPO's legislative priorities, and received our information packets. After that, Andy Edmiston from NAPO, had scheduled several visits for us with the Iowa Congress Senators and Representatives.

We met with Senators Joni Ernst and Charles Grassley, Representatives Ashley Hinson, Zach Nunn, Mariannette Miller-Meeks' staff and Randy Feenstra's staff. During our visit with Representative Zach Nunn, he bestowed President Sammons as the first officer to receive his Iowa of Medal of Merit.

During these meetings we discussed several bills and issues we are seeing in our state and across the nation. We discussed NAPO's Recruit and Retain Act (S. 546), Invest to Protect Act (S. 1144/H.R.) sponsored by Senator Grassley, Protect & Serve Act (H.R. 473) and Back the Blue (H.R. 355), Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act (S. 930/H.R. 1719) and HELPER Act. We also talked about the local support each of our cities shows to officers compared to other areas around the country.

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, we had the honor of attending the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Vigil. It had rained off and on throughout the day. The weather made for a solemn evening for us to pay special tribute to officers who gave their lives in the performance of their duties. As each of the speakers talked, the prevalent theme was service, sacrifice and valor. A total of 556 names were read throughout the ceremony. Unfortunately, Iowa added 6 law enforcement officers names to the wall: John Grampovik, John Williams, Austin Richardson, Henry Graves, James Kent, and Michael German.

On this trip, President Becki Sammons kept Fred and I running from morning to night. We talked to our elected officials, met NAPO President Mick McHale and other board members, and networked with other officers from Iowa and many other states. We were also able to pay our respects to the fallen officers and their families. We got to see the monuments at night, visit the White House, take the elevator to the top of Washington Monument, attend Marine 1 Barracks' Silent drill and go to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Wall. I would encourage all of you to make the trip to Washington, D.C. during Police Week at least once in your career.