



The Washington Report

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

March 21, 2025

Senate Passes HALT Fentanyl Act

The Senate passed the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of (HALT) Fentanyl Act (S. 331), sponsored by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), on March 14 by a vote of 84-16. This important bill will make permanent the current classwide scheduling of all fentanyl-related substances as Schedule 1 drugs under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), giving law enforcement the tools and resources necessary to combat and deter fentanyl in our nation's communities.

Fentanyl is now the drug most associated with overdoses in the United States. It is being mixed with already deadly illicit drugs, hidden in counterfeit drugs, and being peddled at alarmingly high rates to our nation's youth. 5 out of 10 counterfeit prescription drugs seized by law enforcement in 2024 were laced with a deadly dose of fentanyl. Fentanyl is now the drug most associated with overdoses in the United States. The amount of fentanyl the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) seized in 2024 – nearly 8,000 pounds of fentanyl – represents over 367 million deadly doses.

Law enforcement officers are out in our communities fighting the spread of fentanyl. They are responding to fentanyl overdoses and deaths, trying to save lives and take fentanyl off our streets. The temporary renewals Congress has passed over the last several years are not sustainable, and law enforcement needs to know they will continue to have the tools necessary to combat and deter the spread of fentanyl. Fentanyl precursors and analogues must be permanently scheduled as Schedule 1 drugs under the CSA. The HALT Fentanyl Act is a vital part of our fight against fentanyl.

The House passed its version of the bill, H.R. 27, on February 6, by wide bipartisan margins. S. 331 varies slightly from the House-passed version due to some technical corrections that had to be made. We are working with House leadership to quickly take up and pass S. 331 and send it to the President's desk to be signed into law.

NAPO Participates in Meeting with FBI Director

NAPO leadership, including President Mick McHale, Vice President John Flynn, Vice President for Associate Members Mark Young, Executive Director Bill Johnson, and Governmental Affairs Director Andy Edmiston, participated in a meet and greet with Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Kash Patel on March 13. The meeting was specifically for Director Patel to meet and hear from state, local, tribal, and campus law enforcement leadership regarding their needs and how the FBI can best assist them.

During the meeting, Director Patel stated that under his direction the FBI's priorities will be violent crime and national security. He wants streamlined communication between FBI Headquarters and its field offices as well as state and local law enforcement to ensure they are going after violent gang, drug, and immigration-related crimes efficiently and effectively.

Johnson, during the question-and-answer session, asked how we can ensure the rank-and-file view gets heard and not filtered through the chiefs or sheriffs as it is the officers on the street who have a unique perspective of what resources or support are needed. Director Patel responded that he wants to hear from the rank-and-file directly and he will ensure there is someone in his office dedicated to rank-and-file officers. NAPO was the only rank-and-file organization to participate by asking questions directly to Director Patel during the meeting.

Prior to his being confirmed as FBI Director, in a conversation with NAPO's leadership, Mr. Patel indicated his commitment to repairing and maintaining an excellent and open line of communication, which will be vital to ensuring that federal, state, and local law enforcement have a strong partnership and work together effectively. This meeting is the start of that collaboration, and we look forward to working with the Director to ensure our officers have the support and resources needed to fight violent crime in our communities.

Register Today for NAPO's Annual Lobby Day & Legislative Awards Luncheon

Don't miss the opportunity to join NAPO on May 14th for our Annual Lobby Day & Legislative Awards Luncheon on Capitol Hill. This is a great opportunity to lobby Congressional Representatives and Senators on behalf of your members concerning the issues which affect law enforcement. Prior to lobbying Capitol Hill, plan to attend NAPO's Legislative Breakfast for an update on NAPO's legislative priorities, results to date from the 119th Congress, and to receive handouts to use during your Hill visits.

Please Register [online](#) or complete the attached registration form and return to NAPO at aedmiston@napo.org or eloranger@napo.org by MAY 1, 2025.

If you want assistance setting up your Capitol Hill meetings, contact NAPO's Director of Government Affairs, Andy Edmiston, no later than May 1 at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0775.

May 14 Schedule of Events		
Registration	Omni Shoreham Hotel	8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.
Legislative Breakfast	Omni Shoreham Hotel	8:45 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Capitol Hill Visits	Capitol Hill	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
NAPO Legislative Awards Luncheon	Kennedy Caucus Room Russell Senate Office Building	12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Capitol Hill Visits	Capitol Hill	1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The registration fee of \$150.00 per person includes the Legislative Update Breakfast, handouts for your Congressional visits, and the Legislative Awards Luncheon. **Advanced Registration is required.** Please contact Elizabeth Loranger, NAPO's Director of Events, at (800) 322-6278 or eloranger@napo.org if you have any questions regarding registration or hotel arrangements. May 14th will be here before you know it. Register today!

NAPO Urges FBI to Prioritize Rendition of Joanne Chesimard

As the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) just secured the extradition from Mexico of a suspected leader of the MS-13 international criminal gang who was on the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted" list, NAPO President Mick McHale sent **a letter** to FBI Director Kash Patel urging him to seek the return of Joanne Chesimard – and other violent fugitives like her – from Cuba as part of the Bureau's efforts to go after the criminals on the "Most Wanted" list.

Joanne Chesimard is the only woman on the FBI's "Most Wanted" terrorist list for her role in the cold-blooded killing of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster in 1973. The fact that she – and violent felons like her – are living free in Cuba is an affront to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our communities as law enforcement officers – above all to the family and friends of police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Joanne Chesimard has been living a free life in Cuba since 1984, while Trooper Foerster's family has been suffering without closure for over 50 years. NAPO strongly believes that those who commit violent, heinous crimes must face justice to bring peace to the families of those who lost their lives. As the FBI and the Administration work to secure the extradition of violent criminals, the rendition of Joanne Chesimard and other violent felons like her from Cuba must be considered top priorities.

NAPO appreciates the FBI's renewed efforts to go after criminals on its "Most Wanted" list, including seeking extradition, and we look forward to the day that Joanne Chesimard is finally brought to justice for the brutal killing of Trooper Foerster.

NAPO-Endorsed HELPER Act Reintroduced

NAPO once again pledged its support for the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act (H.R. 2094 / S. 978), introduced by Representatives John Rutherford (R-FL) and Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ) and Senators Ashley Moody (R-FL) and Jon Ossoff (D-GA). This bill establishes a first-time homebuyer program through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to provide mortgage assistance to law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders.

Like many public servants, law enforcement officers serve and protect our nation and our communities for modest wages, and they often face financial obstacles when buying a home in today's competitive housing market. Especially with interest rates rising, many officers and their families have found it difficult to afford to purchase homes, making it harder for them to stay and live in the communities they serve.

Police1 conducted a survey in 2021 of 319 police departments where it was found that a staggering 68% of reporting departments stated that high housing costs are hindering their hiring process. By creating a new first time homebuyer loan program through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) that aims

to remove the biggest financial barriers for buying a house – the down payment requirement and a monthly insurance premium requirement – the HELPER Act would provide public safety officers with access to affordable homeownership. The Program created by this bill would help the men and women who have chosen to serve their communities buy homes which might otherwise not been possible.

NAPO Meets with DHS Office for State and Local Law Enforcement

NAPO met with new staff from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office for State and Local Law Enforcement (OSLLE), which is responsible for providing the Department’s primary coordination, liaison, and advocacy work for state and local law enforcement. The goals of the OSLLE are to cultivate partnerships with state and local law enforcement organizations, ensure that our views are understood as DHS formulates policies and programs, foster information sharing, and provide oversight of law enforcement and terrorism focused grants.

With the DHS focusing its resources and efforts on illegal immigration enforcement, our relationship with the OSSLE is incredibly important, whether our members’ agencies participate in 287(g) agreements or operate within so-called “Sanctuary Cities”. There are many ways and different levels law enforcement can work with DHS to protect our communities from violent criminal aliens and meet the specific needs of their local jurisdictions.

We will also work closely with OSSLE on sustaining our priority grant programs within DHS, including the Urban Area Security Initiative and the State Homeland Security Grant Program. An open line of communication with DHS will help us ensure that our officers are getting the resources and support they need to keep our streets and communities safe.

NAPO on the Hill: National Police Week Priorities

NAPO, together with our national law enforcement coalition, continues to push our National Police Week agenda with Congressional leadership. We met with the staff of Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA), Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA), and Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN) to discuss the pro-law enforcement legislation we want to see moved during National Police Week 2025 to honor the law enforcement profession.

We discussed the need for legislation to enhance officer safety by increasing penalties for the murder, attempted murder, or assault of federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, the LEOSA Reform Act, a bill to cover exposure-related cancers under the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) Program, and the Reauthorizing Support and Treatment for Officers in Crisis Act. Many of these are bills that have been joint law enforcement priorities for years, but Congress has failed to act on them.

Of particular focus this year is legislation to increase penalties for the murder, attempted murder, or assault of a federal, state or local law enforcement officer because of their status as a public safety officer. In his address to a Joint Session of Congress on March 4, President Trump called on lawmakers to pass a bill that would mandate the death penalty in cases involving the murder of a law enforcement officer. There are several bills already introduced in this Congress that would do this, including the NAPO-backed Thin Blue Line Act, the Back the Blue Act, and the Justice for Fallen Law Enforcement Act. We

strongly believe that increased penalties will deter such violent crimes against officers and bring greater protections to officers and the communities they serve. We are urging Congress to act on the President's call to action and make one of these bills a National Police Week priority.

While we are being promised that pro-law enforcement legislation will move through the House and Senate during Police Week, we have so far received no commitments to moving any of our listed priority legislation. We will continue to press the case that Congress must act in a significant manner to support our nation's law enforcement.

Our next meetings will be with members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to gain their support for moving our priority bills because without strong Committee support our bills go nowhere.

NAPO's Legislative Positions & Sponsor/Cosponsor Updates

You can now see if your U.S. Representatives and Senators support NAPO's priority legislation on our new interactive [Sponsor/Cosponsor map](#) on our website. The interactive map accompanies the latest "[Legislative Positions](#)" document, which is also available on the NAPO website under "[Washington Report](#)". NAPO's Legislative Positions is a document that highlights all the legislation that we have taken an official position on or are monitoring during the 119th Congress. The map and Legislative Positions document are continually updated to reflect the work we are doing on Capitol Hill.

NAPO Meets with Administration on Closing the De Minimis Loophole

On March 20, NAPO Director of Governmental Affairs Andy Edmiston met with staff from the National Security Council to discuss our ask that the President reimpose his proposed ban on duty-free de minimis treatment for goods from China and to use your existing executive authority granted to the president by Congress in the Tariff Act of 1930 to end de minimis for all commercial shipments from all countries.

NAPO views closing the De Minimis trade loophole as a vital part of a national strategy to stop the spread of fentanyl, which is devastating our communities. Closing the loophole, together with the permanent scheduling of fentanyl-related substances as Schedule 1 drugs under the Controlled Substances Act, drug enforcement measures along our borders, anti-fentanyl task forces, and community substance abuse programs and resources, we can win the fight against this deadly drug.

Our nation's law enforcement officers work hard to keep fentanyl and other dangerous drugs off the streets and out of our neighborhoods, but they are 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.

The de minimis loophole is severely exacerbating the opioid crisis and contributing to overdose deaths by allowing fentanyl, other illegal opioids, and related contraband to enter our market duty free and largely uninspected.

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.