



The Washington Report

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

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NAPO Backs the Peer Support for Our First Responders Act

NAPO pledged our support for the Peer Support for Our First Responders Act (H.R. 8493), introduced by Representatives Suhas Subramanyam (D-VA), Mark Alford (R-MO), and John Rutherford (R-FL). NAPO worked with Representative Subramanyam's office in developing this legislation, which would establish an interagency working group, bringing together experts, law enforcement officers, firefighters, first responders, and stakeholders, focused on peer-to-peer mental health and wellness programs for law enforcement officers and first responders. The working group would review best practices and issue updated recommendations to Congress on ways to improve behavioral and mental health outcomes, including reducing suicide risk, addressing substance use conditions, ensuring confidentiality protections, enhancing training standards, and integrating peer mentoring services with licensed mental and behavioral health professionals.

State and local law enforcement officers are our nation's first responders. They respond to our country's greatest tragedies, violent crimes, and horrible accidents that are occurring more frequently in our communities. They have seen and experienced horrors that they cannot forget, yet we still expect them each day to protect and serve our communities. The least we can do is ensure they have access to the best culturally competent and confidential mental health and wellness services necessary for their wellbeing and that of their families, which is why we support the Peer Support for Our First Responders Act.

NAPO thanks Representatives Subramanyam, Alford, and Rutherford for their leadership and we look forward to working with them to pass this important bill.

NAPO Supports Bill to Shield Federal Officers from Threats and Harassment

NAPO is backing the Halo Act (S. 3179 / H.R. 7846), sponsored by Senator Ashley Moody (R-FL) and Congressman Michael Rulli (R-OH), which would make it illegal for anyone, after receiving a verbal warning, to knowingly come within 25 feet of a federal and certain state and local officers and agents who are engaged in immigration enforcement if their intent is to interfere with the officers' work, threaten the officer with physical harm, or harass the officer. Anyone who breaks this rule could face a fine, up to five years in prison, or both.

The legislation defines federal immigration enforcement officer in such a way that it would cover state and local law enforcement officers who participate in a 287(g) agreement or are assisting federal immigration officers in enforcing federal immigration law.

The consistent drumbeat by politicians, of distrust of the police, engenders attacks on officers and encourages the public not to comply with lawful police commands. It is becoming more and more common for persons who come in contact with police to resist, obstruct, interfere, thwart and even attack officers. This is an unacceptable environment in which officers find themselves and it is impacting not just officer morale, but also retention, hiring, and officer safety and wellness.

Further, officers are targets for disgruntled individuals who harbor hatred for the profession and blame them for all of society's ills and for policies that the officers themselves have no control over. Immigration enforcement officers are being targeted and harassed for simply doing their jobs and enforcing federal immigration laws. The Halo Act would provide much-needed physical distance for officers from those who threaten to harm them or attempt to interfere with officers' lawful actions.

We strongly believe that not only every officer who is enforcing our nation's immigration laws deserves this protection, but also every officer at the federal, state, and local level who put their lives on the line to enforce our laws and safeguard our communities. There should be increased penalties for those who harm, or target for harm, any federal, state, or local officer.

We thank Senator Moody and Congressman Rulli for their leadership on this issue and we look forward to working with them to expand the protection provided by the Halo Act to all law enforcement officers.

NAPO on the Hill: National Police Week Priorities

The Senate Judiciary Committee has committed to moving a slate of seven bipartisan, pro-law enforcement bills in honor of National Police Week on May 14th, including two of NAPO's priority legislation: the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program Expansion Act (S. 3897) and the Fighting Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Act (S. 825). NAPO has been working for months with the Committee to secure the markup of these important bills.

The **Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro PSOB Program Expansion Act** would make vital changes to the PSOB Program to increase transparency and accountability and ensure the Program honors and supports officers and their families who have sacrificed so much in service to their communities, including:

- Require the PSOB Office to complete a death or disability determination within 270 days of receiving a complete claim;
- Expedite claims processing for officers already certified for benefits through the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) or the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF); and
- Direct BJA to implement September 2024 Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations to establish updated program processes and administrative procedures to improve transparency and accountability within the program.

The **Fighting PTSD Act** would direct the Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop treatment programs for police, fire, emergency medical and 911 personnel who suffer from PTSD or acute stress disorders. By

recognizing the prevalence of PTSD within the public safety profession and the need to address PTSD and acute stress disorder among officers, this bill would help make certain they get the treatment and help they need.

The Committee will also take up the following bills on May 14:

- The Lt. Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband (S. 736) would change the crime of bringing a contraband cell phone into a prison from a misdemeanor to a felony.
- The Promoting Police Leadership Act (S. 4394) would task the DOJ with developing a broad training curricula framework for commander-level personnel in consultation with state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, academic institutions, and at NAPO's insistence, representatives of rank-and-file officers, and other relevant partners.
- The Carla Walker Act (S. 1890) would fund a pilot program for the DOJ to use forensic genetic genealogy to investigate, solve, and prosecute cold cases and other hard-to solve crimes.
- The Tribal Warrant Fairness Act (S. 3041) would grant the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) the authority to execute arrest warrants on behalf of Tribal law enforcement and allow the USMS to assist Tribal law enforcement in searching for missing children.
- TREY's Law (S. 3966) would prohibit the enforcement of certain contractual clauses that restrict disclosure of sexual abuse of minors.

We thank the Senate Judiciary Committee, particularly Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Ranking Member Richard Durbin (D-IL), for working with us to truly honor National Police Week and move such important bills as the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro PSOB Program Expansion Act and the Fighting PTSD Act. These bills will have a tremendous impact on the mental health and wellness of officers and their families.

NAPO looks forward to witnessing these strong, bipartisan bills pass the Committee next week. We will then look to Senate leadership to move them swiftly to the Senate floor for a vote.

NAPO Meets with DHS Assistant Secretary for the Office of State and Local Law Enforcement

On April 27, NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson and Director of Governmental Affairs Andy Edmiston met with the Assistant Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of State and Local Law Enforcement (OSLLE), Mike Fullerton. Assistant Secretary Fullerton brings deep institutional knowledge and proven leadership to the role, having previously served as the Executive Director of OSLLE from its creation in 2007 through 2009.

OSLLE is a trusted resource, advocate, and liaison for state, local, tribal, territorial, and campus law enforcement within DHS to help protect communities and safeguard the nation. Assistant Secretary Fullerton, who reports directly to DHS Secretary Mullin, expressed his desire to ensure OSLLE is a resource and partner for NAPO. We have worked closely with OSLLE on state and local law enforcement's ability to access surplus military equipment through FEMA grant programs, immigration enforcement policies, and Homeland Security grant programs.

We look forward to working with Assistant Secretary Fullerton to make certain that state and local law enforcement are fully supported by the Department.

National Blue Alert Advisory Committee Meets

The Blue Alert Advisory Group, of which NAPO is an original member, in conjunction with the Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, convened on April 29 to discuss the Network's continued work to establish Blue Alert systems in all 50 states. The COPS Acting Director Cory Randolph led the meeting.

Currently, eleven states and Washington, D.C. do not have Blue Alert networks. Getting Blue Alert plans up and running in all 50 states is a priority for NAPO as it ensures the National Blue Alert Network we fought so hard to get enacted as part of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act works efficiently and effectively to protect officers from harm. The Act is named after two NYPD officers who were members of NAPO through the PBA of NYC.

The states that currently do not have active Blue Alert Networks are Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Legislation to create a Blue Alert plan is pending in Massachusetts, with NAPO member organization, the Massachusetts Coalition of Police, leading the push for the bill.

During the meeting, the Advisory Committee discussed the Blue Alerts issued since the Advisory Committee last met in January and the latest data on officers shot in the line of duty. Three Blue Alerts were issued over the past four months in Indiana, Missouri, and Tennessee that all resulted in the successful capture of the assailants.

As of April 29, 104 officers have been shot in the line of duty this year, of whom 12 were killed. 25 of the officers who were shot were ambushed. Officers continue to face an increasingly dangerous environment as they work to serve and protect our communities, making the National Blue Alert Network a vital officer safety tool.

NAPO, together with the COPS Office, stand ready to work with stakeholders in these remaining states to help enact such legislation. If you are interested in receiving information and resources on how to establish a Blue Alert plan or you wish to participate in the state-level working group, please contact the NAPO Office at (703) 549-0775 or info@napo.org.

Best practices and other Blue Alert resources collected from around nation, including examples of legislation, policies, forms, and a directory of state Blue Alert officials can be found on the [National Blue Alert Network website](#).

Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security Releases Updated Report on Mandatory Social Security

The Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security (CPRS) worked with Segal, a benefits, compensation and human resources consulting firm, to develop and release a new [report on the hazards of mandatory Social Security](#). For more than twenty years, NAPO has held a leadership position on the Board of CPRS, and

we have a long history of working with our Coalition partners in opposing mandatory Social Security. The CPRS commissioned report highlights the negative and unintended consequences for state and local governments and their employees if Congress were to mandate that all public employers and employees participate in Social Security.

As you know, NAPO secured a huge legislative victory with the repeal of the WEP and GPO provisions and we cannot afford to lose our momentum on Social Security issues. With the Social Security Trust Fund expected to be depleted within the next ten years, NAPO is working to ensure that mandatory Social Security is not considered as an option for extending the life of the Trust Fund.

For more information on NAPO's position on mandatory Social Security, view our [Legislative Priorities Booklet](#) for the 119th Congress.

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.