



House and Senate Set Recommended Budget Levels



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The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) is a coalition of law enforcement unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement and corrections officers through legislative and legal advocacy, political action and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 2,000 police unions and associations, 236,000 sworn law enforcement officers, 11,000 retired officers and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement. Florida PBA, Palm Beach County PBA, Dade County PBA, and Coastal Florida PBA are members of NAPO.

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Earlier this Spring, the House and the Senate both passed concurrent resolutions on the budgetary levels and amounts to be appropriated for fiscal year 2008. These budget plans are non-binding resolutions that will be used to guide the Congressional appropriations process.

If the House and Senate budget resolutions are a sign of what is to come, law enforcement will fare well in the fiscal 2008 appropriations process. While the House plan was not specific as to where the funding should be allocated, it does provide \$46.94 billion for the Administration of Justice function, which is nearly \$1.5 billion more than was provided for the function in fiscal year 2007. The Administration of Justice budget function consists of federal law enforcement programs, litigation and judicial activities, correctional operations, and state and local justice assistance programs.

House Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt (D-SC) added an additional \$1 billion to the total funding level for the Administration of Justice function. He inserted this additional funding with the specific purpose of off-setting the drastic and ill-advised cuts proposed in the President's fiscal 2008 budget to programs such as the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

The Senate budget plan provides \$48.796 billion for the Administration of Justice function for fiscal year 2008. Additionally, during floor consideration, the Senate adopted

several amendments to increase funding for law enforcement programs. Among the amendments approved by the Senate was one offered by Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), which increases funding for the COPS Program to \$1.15 billion for fiscal year 2008. This funding level will provide state and local law enforcement agencies with critical resources necessary to hire community policing and school resource officers, and to purchase new technologies to aid law enforcement in preventing and responding to violent crime and acts of terrorism.

The Senate also adopted an amendment by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), which provides an additional \$543 million for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). The SCAAP grants give funding to states and localities for the reimbursement of costs incurred as a result of state and local agencies housing undocumented criminal aliens.

With the passage of these budget resolutions, the House and Senate are on record as supporting additional funding of vital state and local law enforcement assistance programs. NAPO worked hard to obtain these funding levels in the House and Senate Budget Resolutions (H.Con.Res 99 and S.Con.Res. 21). We will continue to lobby Congress to ensure that the appropriations committees follow the lead of these budget plans and that the needs of local law enforcement are met in the final fiscal 2008 appropriations bills. ■

Legislative Update on Bills of Interest to Law Enforcement

Prisoner Reentry Legislation Approved by House Committee

The House Judiciary Committee amended and approved the "Second Chance Act of 2007," H.R. 1593, on March 28, 2007. This legislation would reauthorize the grant program to provide funding for rehabilitative programming and real-world training for offenders reentering communities in an effort to help them adjust to a crime-free lifestyle. H.R. 1593 would provide \$192 million per year in federal competitive grants to promote initiatives that combine intensive parole supervision with job training, substance abuse treatment, mental health assistance, and other support services to assist high-risk offenders reintegrate into society.

On March 30, 2007, Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE) introduced the Senate companion bill, S. 1060. No action has been taken on the Senate bill.

House Judiciary Committee Looks to Broaden Hate Crimes Law

On April 15, 2007, the House Judiciary Committee approved legislation that would expand the list of hate crimes punishable by time in prison. The "Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007," H.R. 1592, would expand the hate crimes law to provide for separate charges for hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gender and disability. Those convicted of such crimes could be sentenced up to life in prison if the incident resulted in death or involved kidnapping, sexual assault or attempted murder.

In addition to imposing longer sentences for hate crimes, H.R. 1592 would authorize \$5 million for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for grants to state and local law enforcement agencies to help cover the expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. In any one-year period, each agency would be eligible to receive no more than \$100,000. The bill would also award grants to support state and local initiatives designed to fight hate crimes committed by juveniles, including programs to train local law enforcement

officers in identifying, investigating, prosecuting, and preventing hate crimes.

In the Senate, Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) have introduced S. 1105, a bipartisan companion bill to H.R. 1592. No action has been taken on the Senate bill.

Bill Improving 911 Internet Phone Service Moves in Senate

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee approved legislation on April 25, 2007, which would require internet phone services to offer "enhanced" 911 services to all subscribers. Many customers of Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) services such as Vonage or Lingo can dial 911 in case of emergency; however, not all VoIP users have access to enhanced 911 services that transmit a caller's physical location and other important information to law enforcement.

The bill, S. 428, would require the Federal Communications Commission to issue regulations granting VoIP companies access to the nation's traditional 911 infrastructure, which is handled by the Bell telephone companies. Landline calls and wireless calls are already connected to this infrastructure, which makes it relatively easy for 911 operators to trace calls or route the calls to the nearest public safety personnel. S. 428 amends the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 to give this same access to VoIP services.

The bill would also give state and local entities the authority to impose and collect 911-related fees from VoIP providers. ■

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi



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