



House Passes Public Safety Safety Collective Bargaining Bill



Former PBA attorney Bill Johnson is the Executive Director of NAPPO.

The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPPO) 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, NAPPO 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 NAPPO.

www.napo.org

Sign in a store window:

"WE WOULD RATHER DO BUSINESS WITH 1000 AL QAEDA TERRORISTS THAN WITH ONE SINGLE AMERICAN"

This sign was prominently displayed in the window of a business in Philadelphia.

You are probably outraged at the thought of such an inflammatory statement.

One would think that anti-hate groups from all across the country would be marching on this business and that the National Guard might have to be called to keep the angry crowds back. But, perhaps in these stressful times one might be tempted to let the proprietors simply make their statement.

We are a society which holds Freedom of Speech as perhaps our greatest liberty. And after all, it is just a sign.

You may ask what kind of business would dare post such a sign?

Answer: A Funeral Home
(Who said morticians had no sense of humor?)

In an outstanding victory for NAPPO and the rank and file law enforcement community, the House of Representatives passed the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, H.R. 980, by an overwhelming vote of 314 to 97!

The "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act" will guarantee the rights of law enforcement officers, fire-fighters, and emergency medical service workers in all 50 states to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. States that offer equal or greater collective bargaining rights will be exempt from this federal statute.

Approximately twenty states do not fully protect the collective bargaining rights of public safety employees, and two states – Virginia and North Carolina – prohibit public safety employees from collectively bargaining.

NAPPO President Tom Nee spoke at a rally, together with Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Majority Whip Steny Hoyer, members of Congress and public safety groups, on the steps of the U.S. Capitol to commemorate this event: "On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations, representing 238,000 rank and file law enforcement officers from across the nation, I want to thank Representatives Kildee and Duncan for sponsoring this important legislation, as well as Chairman Miller and Chairman Andrews for their work moving it

through Committee. Your efforts on behalf of the public safety community have been tremendous. This is truly a great day for public safety officers. NAPPO has been fighting to extend basic collective bargaining rights to all public safety officers for 12 years. The passage of the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act today in the House is long overdue recognition to those who put their lives on the line everyday to protect the public. These officers deserve these basic American rights. NAPPO looks forward to seeing this bill pass in the Senate and signed into law by the President."

NAPPO worked closely with **Congressmen Dale Kildee** (D-MI) and John Duncan (R-TN) to successfully ensure the passage of this legislation. NAPPO was the **only** rank and file law enforcement organization to testify in support of this bill and its importance to public safety officers at the House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions hearing on H.R. 980.

This victory in the House is a significant step toward giving public safety officers the right to collectively bargain, but our work is not done. NAPPO is now focusing our efforts toward working with **Senators Edward Kennedy** and **Judd Gregg** to introduce and pass this important legislation in the Senate.

The House Passes NAPPO-Endorsed Act To Ban Posting Of Police Officer Information On The Web

In another victory for NAPPO, the House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation on July 10, 2007, which protects law enforcement officers, undercover agents, informants and witnesses in a criminal investigation or prosecution from having their personal information posted on the internet. This bill makes the posting of such personal data with the intent to threaten, intimidate, or harm illegal.

Recent news reports have shed light on websites devoted to identifying informants, police officers and undercover agents, complete with photos, court documents, employment information and personal addresses. NAPPO believes there is a compelling state interest in ensuring that law enforcement officers are protected on and off the job. NAPPO worked closely on legislation with **Congressman Anthony Weiner** (D-NY), who shares our concern that the posting of such private information about police officers could easily be used to intimidate the officers and perhaps endanger their families. It is important to prohibit publication of such information about police officers, as well as other law enforcement and justice officials, on the internet or in any public forum.

Language similar to Congressman Weiner's legislation (H.R. 2980, the "Internet Police Protection Act of 2007")

was adopted as part of the Court Security Improvement Act, H.R. 660. The significant difference between the original language and that included in H.R. 660 is that the latter qualifies public safety officers to include only those who work for a public agency that receives federal financial assistance.

In addition to making it illegal to post the personal information of law enforcement officers on the internet, H.R. 660 would make it illegal to possess dangerous weapons in a federal court facility, increase funding to the Marshals Service for the protection of judges and extend this protection to tax court judges and some retired senior judges.

The Senate passed its version of the Court Security Improvement Act, S. 378, on May 19, 2007. Unfortunately, S. 378 does not include language to protect the private information of law enforcement officers from being posted publicly on the web. NAPPO is now focusing its attentions on the conference negotiations between the House and the Senate to ensure that lawmakers recognize the need to include this important legislation in the final bill. NAPPO will also continue fighting for the passage of H.R. 2980 in order to ensure that all public safety officers and their families are protected.

Congress Looks To Double Funding For Mentally Ill Offender Treatment Act

After several months of hard work by NAPPO, the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittees in both the House and the Senate increased funding for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) for fiscal 2008. The Subcommittees showed their support for this important program by doubling funding of MIOTCRA from last year's level of \$5 million to \$10 million in fiscal 2008. The respective Appropriations Committees verified that support by passing this funding level as part of their committee reports.

The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act encourages mental health and criminal justice systems to work together in devising new, more effective ways to assist the mentally ill. Demands for grants available through this program have far exceeded their availability. In 2006, for example, only 27 (11%) received funding out of 250

submitted grant applications from states and communities.

Programs funded through this Act benefit communities in many ways. They reduce burdens on criminal justice and correctional systems by diverting non-violent offenders with serious mental illness to needed treatment. They foster improved collaboration between the criminal justice and mental health systems to enable people with serious mental illness to successfully reenter their communities. Additionally, and perhaps most important to law enforcement, these programs increase public safety and reduce recidivism.

The CJS Appropriations bills now move to the full House and Senate for final action. NAPPO does not anticipate any problems with retaining this increase for MIOTCRA; however, we will closely monitor these bills throughout the rest of the appropriations process to ensure that MIOTCRA and all state and local justice assistance programs are fully funded.