

Special to the *TUEBOR* from NAPO

The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States and was organized for the purpose of advancing the interests of America's law enforcement officers through legislative advocacy, political action and education.

Founded in 1978, NAPO is the strongest unified voice in supporting law enforcement officers in the United States. NAPO represents more than 2,000 police unions and associations, over 238,000 sworn law enforcement officers and 11,000 retired officers who share a common dedication to vigorous and effective representation on behalf of our nation's law enforcement officers.

What is the Purpose of NAPO?

Increasingly, the rights and interests of law enforcement officers have been the subject of legislative, executive and judicial action in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. From issues of federal funding of state law enforcement and anti-terrorism efforts to federal policy on employee health, pension and other benefits, the actions of Congress and the Administration significantly impact public safety interests. These interests must be vigorously protected. That's where NAPO comes in.

NAPO has achieved a number of solid legislative and administrative victories for its members. Here are just a few examples of what NAPO has accomplished.

Enactment of the Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act (Right to carry legislation)

Enactment of the National AMBER Alert Act

Enactment of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, the largest anti-crime legislation in U.S. history, which created the COPS program and funded law enforcement and crime prevention measures, including establishing the "three strikes" provision for violent offenders

Enactment of legislation in 1998 which raised the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) for officers killed in the line of duty from \$50,000 to \$100,000 plus annual cost of living indexing

Enactment of legislation which made the federal death benefit tax free to survivors

Enactment of legislation in 2002 which raised the PSOB base from \$100,000 to \$250,000. It is currently over \$295,000

Enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act

Enactment of several amendments to the PSOB Act, including the Hometown Heroes Act, which provides federal coverage for heart attacks and strokes, and the Police, Fire and Emergency Officers Educational Assistance Act

Enactment, and later the renewal, of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998, which provides federal funds to state and local law enforcement to purchase vests

Enactment of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006

In addition to NAPO's numerous legislative victories, there are many areas where NAPO continues to fight for America's law enforcement officers. Among them:

Passage of the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act in the House of Representatives in July 2007. This act will grant the basic rights of collective bargaining for wages, hours and safe working conditions to all public safety officers;

The State and Local Law Enforcement Discipline, Accountability and Due Process Act (the National Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights);

Gang abatement and prevention;

Combating Methamphetamine;

Protecting officers' pension and Social Security benefits; and

Ensuring full funding for vital state and local law enforcement assistance programs through the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security.

NAPO not only works to influence the course of national affairs where law enforcement interests are concerned, but we also work hard to maintain the welfare of our members in the law enforcement community.

In 2002, NAPO established the National Association of Police Organizations Relief Fund, dedication "to provide for the physical, medical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of law enforcement officers and their families who have suffered hardship as a result of catastrophe, storm,

flood, earthquake, fire, evacuation, relocation, disaster, war or other acts or accidents of nature or man.”

NAPO’s annual TOP COPS Awards, which was first held in October 1994, recognizes sworn law enforcement officers from across the country who are nominated by their peers for outstanding service.

NAPO established a sister 501(c)(3) research and education organization in 1991, the Police Research and Education Project (PREP). PREP has conducted research on law enforcement stress and its effect on the family under the auspices of National Institute of Justice grants.

NAPO established the National Law Enforcement Officers Rights Center in 1994, to protect officers’ legal and constitutional rights. The Rights Center has filed numerous *amicus curiae* briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court and other courts of appeal on behalf of law enforcement officers from across the country.

NAPO is a founding member of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), and continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Memorial and the new National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, D.C.

NAPO also serves as a board or coalition member on more than a dozen committees, coalitions, conferences and networks working on various causes from body armor design and usage to crime prevention and preserving retirement security.

This is a brief overview about what NAPO is and what we’ve been able to accomplish over the past 30 years. NAPO understands and emphasizes the importance of being involved, in actively seeking to improve the laws and policies of the United States, for the benefit of our members and the public at large.

What happens in Washington, D.C. can have a very real and direct impact on the line officer in every department in this country: There is simply no substitute for being actively and tenaciously involved in the process. NAPO works to ensure that law enforcement will continue to have a seat at the table when the important decisions of our towns, our counties, our states and our nation are made.

For more detailed information about NAPO, visit www.napo.org or contact the NAPO office at 800-322-6276.