

NAPO Advocacy Highlights: Opposing Judicial Nominee, Expanding Community Programs, and Strengthening Law Enforcement Initiatives

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NAPO Opposes 3rd Circuit Court Judge Nominee

NAPO has serious concerns with President Biden's nominee to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Adeel A. Mangi, who was narrowly approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 18. We sent [a letter](#) to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Ranking Member Lindsey Graham (R-SC) on January 25, outlining our concerns with Mr. Mangi's nomination and urging opposition to his nomination to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

President Biden has nominated an individual with no experience being a judge to the bench one step removed from the Supreme Court. Not only that, but Mr. Mangi is also an Advisory Board Member of the Alliance of Families for Justice, which was founded by Kathy Boudin, who was convicted for her role in the 1981 Brink's robbery by the Weather Underground that left two police officers executed in cold blood.

The Alliance of Families for Justice has advocated for the release of at least six other cop-killers – Sundiata Acoli, Mumia Abu Jamal, Mutulu Shakur, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Jamil Al Amin, Kamau Sadiki – referring to them all as “elder freedom fighters.” The fact that the Alliance raises these cop-killers as leaders to follow and is calling for their release is an affront to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our communities as law enforcement officers. NAPO has worked to ensure these murders are denied parole and remain in prison for their heinous acts.

NAPO strongly feels that Mr. Mangi’s work as a Board Member of the Alliance of Families for Justice should be disqualifying. It is one thing to stand up for the rights of those shunned or mistreated by society. It is a far different thing to exalt unrepentant killers who were convicted following legal trials in courts of law. Mr. Mangi has consistently and even proudly advocated against those who serve and sacrifice to protect us all. His conscious work with the Alliance shows an anti-victim and anti-police bias that would certainly cloud his decision making as a judge.

NAPO is working to ensure Mr. Mangi’s nomination is not brought to the Senate floor for confirmation and is withdrawn.

NAPO Supports Bill Expanding Good Neighbor Next Door Program

NAPO pledged our support for the Housing for Heroes Act of 2023 (H.R. 6863), introduced by Representative Mike Lawler (R-NY), which expands the Department of Housing and Urban Development's

(HUD) Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program for law enforcement officers, firefighters, and members of the Armed Services.

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. 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.

HUD's Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program allows law enforcement officers to purchase a home at a discount of 50 percent from the list price if they commit to live at the house as their primary residence for 36 months and the house is a HUD-owned property located in a designated revitalization area. While this Program has been beneficial in helping public servants afford homes, the selection of homes is extremely limited. For example, there are currently only 3 houses available through the Program in the entire country: one in Kentucky, one in Michigan, and one in Virginia.

By expanding the portfolio of available homes through the Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program to include those not revitalization areas, the Housing for Heroes Act would provide public safety officers with improved access to affordable homeownership. This bill would help the men and women who have chosen to serve their communities buy homes which might otherwise not been possible.

NAPO thanks Representative Lawler for his support of the law enforcement community and we look forward to working with him to pass this important bill.

NAPO-Backed COPS on the Beat Parity Act Introduced in House

Representatives Nick LaLota (R-NY) and Chris Pappas (D-NH) introduced the House version of the COPS on the Beat Grant Program Reauthorization and Parity Act (H.R.6973). This legislation would reauthorize the COPS Grant Program and expand it to allow rural, low-income communities to use COPS Hiring Program (CHP) grant funding to increase law enforcement wages. The bill would also provide for a lower match for qualifying lower-income rural communities that gradually increases over time to ensure these departments can participate in the CHP.

The COPS Program provides invaluable resources, training, and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, helping to keep our communities safe. However, small and rural agencies across the country find themselves getting left behind due to their size and lack of resources. The COPS on the Beat Grant Program Reauthorization and Parity Act levels the playing field for small and rural law enforcement agencies and ensures greater access to departments in lower-income communities that otherwise would not be able to afford to participate in the grant program.

NAPO worked tirelessly with members of Congress and the Administration to enact the COPS Program in 1994. We endeavored to ensure this reauthorization continued and enhanced the original intent of the COPS Program to support law enforcement agencies large and small, urban and rural hire and retain community police officers.

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) is the sponsor of the Senate version of the COPS on the Beat Grant Program Reauthorization and Parity Act, S. 1530. We thank Representatives LaLota and Pappas and Senator Graham for their leadership and we look forward to working with them to ensure all law enforcement agencies have the support and resources necessary to serve and protect our communities.

NAPO Participates in PSOB Stakeholder Meeting

On January 24, NAPO participated in a follow up meeting to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program national stakeholders meeting that was held on December 15, 2023, to discuss outreach approaches to help PSOB obtain required claim documentation from families, injured officers, and agencies. Participating in the meeting were organizations representing rank-and-file public safety officers and management as well as assistance and support groups, who all shared how they interact with the PSOB Program and educate officers and their families on it. This meeting was the first of a working group created to determine how to refine and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of PSOB outreach efforts to ensure complete and timely claim submissions.

Outreach is just one area where NAPO believes the PSOB Program greatly needs improvement. NAPO continues to push for transparency and accountability within the Program to safeguard the intent of the law and to make certain officers and their families are not left in the dark and strung along when it comes to the status of their benefits claims.

NAPO Joins Effort to Reauthorize the Undetectable Firearms Act

NAPO joined the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Major County Sheriffs of America, National District Attorneys Association, National Fusion Center Association, National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition, and the National Sheriffs Association in a letter to Congressional leadership urging the reauthorization of the Undetectable Firearms Act before the current authorization expires on March 8, 2024.

The Undetectable Firearms Act makes it unlawful to manufacture or possess any firearm that is not detectable by a walk-through metal detector or x-ray machine. Reauthorizing the Undetectable Firearms Act will ensure we maintain the ability to detect threats in the most highly targeted areas and secure facilities, businesses, and schools across the country. Law enforcement officers rely on these security screening devices to keep the public safe and stop crime before it occurs. This tool will not be reliable if Congress allows the authorization to lapse.

NAPO and our law enforcement partners are working to reauthorize the Undetectable Firearms Act by any legislative means possible.

NAPO-Backed Anti-Swatting Bill Introduced in Senate

Senator Rick Scott (R-FL) introduced the Senate version of the NAPO-supported Preserving Safe Communities by Ending Swatting Act (S. 3602). Swatting calls are on the rise and are being used to harass and intimidate the victims. These calls are not only a serious waste of resources, but they also put the officers and any innocent people at the scene of the fake incident in a dangerous and difficult situation. The legislation defines swatting as a call to a police department with a false story of a crime in progress with the intent to draw a large police presence to a particular address.

NAPO supports this legislation as it would impose strict penalties for swatting, particularly if someone is seriously hurt because of a swatting attack. We firmly believe stricter penalties act as a deterrent, and we thank Senator Rick Scott for introducing this important legislation.

Representative David Kustoff (R-TN) is the sponsor of the House version, H.R. 3913.

Congress Makes Moves on De Minimis Loophole

On January 17, Chairman Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) sent a letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas urging him to take action to strengthen enforcement of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which was passed to prevent Chinese forced-labor products from entering the U.S. market. In the letter, Chairman Gallagher and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi drew attention to the de minimis loophole in U.S. trade law as a major obstacle to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) fully enforcing UFLPA. The Select Committee on the CPP was established to build a bipartisan consensus on the threat posed by the CCP and develop a plan of action to “defend the American people, our economy, and our values.”

The de minimis loophole in U.S. trade law allows individual packages to be shipped directly to American consumers with virtually no inspection or documentation and duty free if the contents are valued beneath the de minimis threshold of \$800. CBP received over 1 billion de minimis shipments in fiscal year 2023. With the rise of e-commerce and mass distribution shippers, the de minimis provision has exploded in popularity creating a supercharged black-market for counterfeit products, goods produced with slave labor, hazardous materials, and illicit drugs, including fentanyl.

This de minimis provision has become a dangerous gateway that allows millions of direct mail shipments of illicit narcotics from anywhere in the world to enter the U.S. market virtually uninspected, destroying families and entire communities and overwhelming law enforcement agencies.

NAPO has been actively working to close the de minimis loophole for e-commerce shipments to help protect the health and safety of the

American people. We have sent letters to the Administration and to Congress urging them to close this loophole. We testified at a Congressional hearing on this issue and are meeting with Ways & Means Committee Trade Subcommittee Ranking Member Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) to discuss next steps on legislative proposals to address the loophole. We also joined a coalition of textile trade associations, addiction organizations, and families who have lost a child to fentanyl to work together to push for the closing of this loophole.

NAPO supports the Select Committee's letter and thanks Chairman Gallagher and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi for their efforts to highlight and address this serious issue.

Kelsey Smith Act Reintroduced in House

Representative Jake LaTurner (R-KS) reintroduced the Kelsey Smith Act (H.R. 6823), which would require telecommunications companies to give law enforcement information about the location of a subscriber's phone when there is an emergency involving the risk of death or serious physical injury. While current law does not prohibit these companies from giving location information to law enforcement in emergencies, it does not require them to do so and there is no uniform standard in the industry for responding to such requests.

In the case of Kelsey Smith, it took Verizon four days after the initial emergency request to give law enforcement the geographic coordinates of Kelsey's phone. After the information was received, it only took 45 minutes for law enforcement to find her body. Unfortunately, the Kelsey

Smith case is not uncommon. Problems with service provider responsiveness to law enforcement requests are real and widespread.

Thirty states have passed their own versions of the Kelsey Smith Act, thanks to the dedication and hard work of Kelsey's parents, Greg and Missey Smith. NAPO is working to ensure that Congress passes a federal minimum standard for telecommunications companies to respond to law enforcement emergency geolocation requests so that law enforcement in every state across the country has speedy access to this vital information in emergency situations.

NAPO Supports Bill to Combat Money Laundering

NAPO continues to support the Combating Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, and Counterfeiting Act (S. 3643), which was introduced by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA), John Cornyn (R-TX) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) on January 23.

This legislation would modernize and strengthen our nation's criminal money laundering statutes to more effectively fight criminal organizations, drug traffickers and terrorists who are increasingly using sophisticated methodologies to smuggle, transfer and counterfeit money to pay for their operations. The changes this Act would make are vital to law enforcement's efforts to crack down on these crimes and defeat organized crime syndicates that threaten the safety of our nation and our communities.

NAPO looks forward to working with Senators Grassley, Cornyn, and Klobuchar on passing this important legislation.