



The Washington Report

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Representing America's Finest

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Senate Passes NAPO Priority PSOB Bill

Before adjourning for a month-long recess on August 7, the Senate passed the **Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers' Benefits Expansion Act** by voice vote. This bill, sponsored by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Ted Cruz (R-TX), is a top priority for NAPO as it would make vital changes to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (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. Specifically, the bill would:

- 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 the Bureau of Justice Assistance, under which PSOB falls, 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.

NAPO has been frustrated with the deficiencies in the Public Safety Officer's Benefits (PSOB) Program for far too long. Over nearly the past 10 years, we worked with Congress to enact five laws to improve the transparency and accountability of the PSOB Program and expand eligibility for PSOB death and disability benefits: Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act of 2017, Safeguarding America's First Responders Act of 2020, Protecting America's First Responders Act of 2021, the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022, and the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act of 2025. While PSOB has worked to implement the provisions expanding eligibility for benefits, it has failed to execute many of the transparency and accountability provisions that were included in these Acts, making it difficult for it to efficiently and effectively help claimants and determine claims.

PSOB claimants – both officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty and the families of officers who died in the line of duty – continually reach out to NAPO asking for help with their claims that have been dragging on for three or four years, some even up to twelve years with no understanding why PSOB is taking so long to determine their claim. It is unacceptable that these brave men and women and their families are being treated in such an abhorrent manner.

NAPO worked with Senators Gillibrand and Cruz to introduce the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro PSOB Expansion Act to address these serious concerns with the Program. Transparency and

accountability in the PSOB Program is essential to make certain that it is being implemented as Congress intended – to unequivocally honor and support officers and their families who died or have been catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

While the Senate passage of this important bill is a significant victory, we continue to pursue every possible path to get it to the President’s desk to be signed into law, including offering it as an amendment to the Fiscal 2027 National Defense Authorization Act. It is our intention to see the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro PSOB Expansion Act enacted before the end of this Congress.

Todd Blanche Sworn in as U.S. Attorney General

On August 8, the Senate narrowly voted 50-49 to confirm Todd Blanche as the next Attorney General of the United States. Mr. Blanche was officially sworn in by President Trump on August 10, just three weeks after he addressed NAPO at our Annual Convention in Detroit, Michigan, pledging to continue his strong support for state and local law enforcement.

NAPO endorsed Attorney General Blanche’s nomination as he has proven his commitment to the rule of law and a fair and impartial justice system throughout his distinguished career in both public service and the private sector. As Deputy Attorney General and, later, Acting Attorney General, he has built a strong partnership with the law enforcement community. From supporting the Department of Justice’s law enforcement assistance grant programs to working to ensure accountability within the Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) Program, he has consistently endeavored to meet the needs of state and local law enforcement officers and their families.

We look forward to growing our relationship with Attorney General Blanche and working with him and the Department to ensure state and local law enforcement get the support and resources necessary to effectively serve and protect our nation’s communities.

NAPO Meets with Assistant Attorney General

NAPO Executive Director Bill Johnson met with Assistant Attorney General Colin McDonald and other national law enforcement representatives on August 13. NAPO was the only rank-and-file organization at the meeting. This is the first meeting with the Assistant Attorney General, who wants to establish regular meetings and communications with representatives of state and local law enforcement to hear about challenges and successes in the field.

Johnson thanked Assistant Attorney General McDonald for the meeting and noted the improved communications and support for line officers under this DOJ, including from the Civil Rights Division, and emphasized NAPO’s willingness to be a conduit of feedback to the Administration about what is working and what is not from the line officer’s perspective.

Johnson also used this opportunity to once again reiterate the problems our members are facing with the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) Program. Assistant Attorney General McDonald responded that the Department has made great progress in clearing out the backlog at PSOB and addressing structural issues within the Program and will continue working with us to ensure all our concerns are met.

Johnson also restated our position that the DOJ can and should go after those who target/attack officers, whenever there is any appreciable federal nexus, in terms of funding, task force membership, and federal

rights at stake, among others, pointing to former Attorney General Jeff Session's 2017 memo tasking all DOJ components with aggressively prosecuting those who threaten or attack officers, using the tools in the toolbox which they already have.

NAPO appreciates the opportunity to meet with Assistant Attorney General McDonald and strengthen our relationship with the Department.

NAPO Backs PSOB Enhancement Act

NAPO pledged our support for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Enhancement Act (H.R. 9845), introduced by Representatives Lou Correa (D-CA) and Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ). NAPO worked closely with Congressmen Correa and Van Drew on this bipartisan legislation that would improve the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program by making it easier for survivors of public safety officers who suffer from fatal heart attacks or strokes in the line of duty to receive benefits from the program.

In 2003, NAPO worked to ensure the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act was signed into law, allowing officers who suffer debilitating or fatal heart attacks or strokes while on, or related to, active duty or training work to be eligible for PSOB death and disability benefits. We later helped enact the Dale Long PSOB Improvements Act in 2012, expanding PSOB coverage to include certain vascular ruptures in addition to heart attacks and strokes.

With the enactment of these two laws, PSOB provides a presumption of injury and causation when a public safety officer suffers a fatal heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture within 24 hours of engaging in certain nonroutine stressful or strenuous physical public safety activities, or participating in nonroutine physically stressful or strenuous training exercises while on duty. Unfortunately, we have found that in many of these cases, PSOB does not truly honor the presumption of injury and causation. It instead requires the survivors to prove that the heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture was a direct result of line of duty action, which leads to claims being unfairly denied where additional risk factors may have been present.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits Enhancement Act modifies the PSOB program to address this issue by:

- Extending the time period for heart attacks, strokes, and vascular ruptures to be covered from 24 to 72 hours; and
- Changing the presumption so that qualifying events are covered unless medical evidence says it was unrelated to service—instead of placing the burden of proof on the survivors to show it was directly caused by the activity.

NAPO thanks Congressmen Correa and Van Drew for their efforts to ensure that survivors receive the benefits they deserve.

NAPO Endorses Lance Schroyer for ICE Director

NAPO endorsed Lance Schroyer to serve as the next Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Mr. Schroyer's distinguished, nearly 30-year career in public service gives him a unique perspective that will only benefit him as ICE Director.

From his service with the United States Marine Corps to his time as an Oklahoma state trooper, he intimately understands the various aspects of ICE's broad mission to keep our nation safe.

Throughout his career, Mr. Schroyer has a proven history of working with all different components of law enforcement, specifically, from our point of view, with state and local law enforcement agencies and officers. He understands the vital role that the officers on the front lines play in protecting our communities. In a conversation with NAPO President Mick McHale, he committed to repairing and maintaining an excellent and open line of communication, which will be vital to ensuring that federal, state, and local law enforcement have a strong partnership and work together effectively.

NAPO is urging the Senate to quickly confirm Mr. Schroyer when it returns from August recess.

Congress Breaks for August Recess

Congress is out on August recess with the House set to return on August 31 and the Senate on September 14. Before adjourning, the Senate approved a bipartisan stopgap spending bill that would keep the government funded through December 11, while the House passed its own version that would fund the government through December 4. While the two chambers still need to work out a final deal when they come back in September, this significantly reduces the threat of an October government shutdown.

Congress will return to a busy Fall schedule, including final passage of a continuing resolution to fund the government, the Fiscal 2027 National Defense Authorization Act, and reauthorizing Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Importantly for NAPO, the Senate must also take up and pass the reauthorization of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), which expires in February 2027. The House passed the First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act back in April.

The Administration and Senate Republicans are also eager to take up the Digital Asset Market Clarity Act when Congress returns from recess. This legislation would establish regulatory frameworks for cryptocurrencies and digital assets and is a priority for President Trump. NAPO has been meeting with the Administration and House and Senate leadership to negotiate changes that would let law enforcement go after bad actors in crypto marketplaces without unnecessarily getting in the way of innovation. We did secure additional grant funding, training, and resources in the bill to help state and local law enforcement investigate and prosecute financial crimes.

Senate Republicans and Democrats continue to negotiate changes to the Clarity Act to get the 60 votes needed to move the bill forward. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) filed cloture before the Senate adjourned, setting up the first procedural vote on the bill for September 15.

It will be a busy September when Congress returns. We will be concentrating on passing our legislative priorities in the little legislative time left in the 119th Congress.

The Washington Report is taking a hiatus for the remainder of August Recess along with Congress. We will be back in your inboxes in September, unless something comes up before then that requires your attention. In the meantime, 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.