

## Bill Introduced That Allows DHS Grant Funds To Be Used For Salaries Or Overtime Pay

On July 10, 2007, **Congressman Anthony Weiner** (D-NY) introduced legislation that will prohibit the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from limiting the amount of Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) or State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) grant funds that may be used to pay salaries or overtime pay of law enforcement officials engaged in antiterrorism activities. The "First Responder Funding Modernization Act of 2007," H.R. 2979, directs DHS, in evaluating the anticipated effectiveness of proposed uses of grant funds, to treat the use of these funds for salaries and overtime pay of law enforcement officers as at least as effective as all other proposed uses.

Currently, Homeland Security grants provide only limited funding for law enforcement personnel initiatives. They are also distributed through the states, unlike the COPS grants which go directly to law enforcement agencies, giving them more flexibility in deciding where and how to use the funds to meet their communities' needs the best. More often than not, the funds most needed by local law

enforcement agencies are those that can be used to hire new officers and retain officers. H.R. 2979 will assist state and local law enforcement agencies in meeting these needs.

When **NAPO President Tom Nee** testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs concerning the necessity of greater federal support for state and local law enforcement assistance programs, he emphasized the need to make more funds available for the hiring and retention of officers. This is particularly important in light of the additional homeland security duties taken on by law enforcement officers since 9/11. In many police departments around the nation, officers do not get fairly compensated for these added duties and training, making it difficult for departments to retain highly qualified officers and to recruit and retain new officers.

NAPO supports Congressman Weiner's efforts and will fight to ensure that law enforcement agencies get the funds they need to efficiently and effectively protect our neighborhoods.

## Legislation Advances That Assists States With The Cleanup Of Meth Labs

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved a bill on June 6, 2007, that would require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish voluntary guidelines that states and localities could use when creating policies for the cleanup of methamphetamine laboratories. The "Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2007," S. 635, introduced by **Senator Max Baucus** (D-MT), aims to help states address the rapidly expanding number of meth lab sites shut down by law enforcement. It would establish a research program to develop new meth detection technologies, require the EPA to convene a conference with state agencies and experts to

provide information about the guidelines, and mandate the study of the residual effects of meth labs. The bill authorizes \$5 million over two years for the program.

According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), one pound of methamphetamine production results in up to five pounds of dangerous waste chemicals, such as lye, red phosphorus, hydriodic acid and iodine.

On February 7, 2007, the House overwhelmingly passed the companion bill, H.R. 365, by a vote of 426-2.

NAPO supports this legislation because it is especially important to our western members.

## House And Senate Working To Resolve Differences Between Their Respective 9/11 Commission Recommendations Bills

On July 25, 2007, the **House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson** (D-MS) and **Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Joe Lieberman** (I-CT) announced a deal between Senate and House negotiators on legislation that completes the implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations.

The Senate passed its version of the broad-ranging anti-terrorism bill, "Improving America's Security Act of 2007" (S. 4) on March 13, 2007. The House passed its version of the bill, H.R.1, on January 9, 2007.

The White House threatened to veto the "Improving America's Security Act of 2007" over a provision which would grant Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) collective bargaining rights and worker protections enjoyed by most other Homeland Security Department employees. According to the administration and Congressional Republicans, the response to a national emergency would be drastically curtailed and it would risk the lives of Americans if airport screeners were allowed the right to unionize. This national security argument sounds very familiar to NAPO as it is the same one the current administration has used to deny public safety officers collective bargaining rights. The argument is getting stale and lacks any real foundation to support it.

Unfortunately, the Senate held up conference negotiations for months until the House gave in to the demand that it take the TSO collective bargaining language off the negotiation table, thus removing the veto threat. Conference negotiations began on July 17, 2007, and both chambers hope to vote on the conference report before the August recess. The conference report must be signed by a majority of the conferees from each chamber before it can be sent to the Senate and House floors for final passage.

The conference report would restructure the three biggest Homeland Security grant programs for first responders: the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), and the Urban Area Security Initiative

(UASI). The report would provide greater distribution of homeland security grants for states and high-risk urban areas based on risk of terrorism, while still ensuring that all states have funds available for basic preparedness. Each state is guaranteed a minimum of .375 percent of funds in fiscal 2008 to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks. By 2012, this percentage will be scrolled down to a minimum of .35 percent.

The report also includes several authorizations (which do not guarantee that money will be appropriated for these initiatives) as part of an overall effort to ensure that all states have basic capabilities to prepare for and respond to both man-made and natural disasters. The bill would authorize for fiscal 2008 \$1.8 billion to assist states and high-risk urban areas in preparing for terrorist threats and \$400 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants to assist states in preparing for all-hazards. It also would provide a \$400 million authorization annually beginning in fiscal 2009 for interoperable emergency communications.

Other key provisions of interest in the conference report are:

- A dedicated interoperability grant program to improve interoperability at local, state, and federal levels;
- More than \$4 billion over four years for rail, transit, and bus security grants;
- \$250 million annually for airport checkpoint screening and \$450 million annually for baggage screening;
- Protection from lawsuits for people who in good faith report what they believe is terrorist activity in and around airplanes, trains, and buses.

NAPO feels that the implementation of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission represents a key step towards ensuring that state and local first responders are properly supported, trained and equipped to prevent terrorism before it occurs. NAPO will continue to work with Congress to ensure that the needs of state and local law enforcement are met in the final 9/11 recommendations legislation. ●

## BLONDE JOKE

A blonde and a lawyer are seated next to each other on a flight from LA to NY. The lawyer asks if she would like to play a fun game? The blonde, tired, just wants to take a nap, politely declines and rolls over to the window to catch a few winks. The lawyer persists and explains that the game is easy and a lot of fun.

He explains, "I ask you a question, and if you don't know the answer, you pay me \$5.00, and vice versa." Again, she declines and tries to get some sleep.

The lawyer, now agitated, says, "Okay, if you don't know the answer you pay me \$5.00, and if I don't know the answer, I will pay you \$500." This catches the blonde's attention and, figuring there will be no end to this torment unless she plays, agrees to the game. The lawyer asks the first question.

"What's the distance from the earth to the moon?"

The blonde doesn't say a word, reaches into her purse, pulls out a \$5.00 bill and hands it to the lawyer.

"Okay," says the lawyer, "your turn."

She asks the lawyer, "What goes up a hill with three legs and comes down with four legs?"

The lawyer, puzzled, takes out his laptop computer and searches all his references, no answer. He taps into the air phone with his modem and searches the net and the library of congress, no answer. Frustrated, he sends e-mails to all his friends and coworker, to no avail. After an hour, he wakes the blonde, and hands her \$500.

The blonde says, "Thank you," and turns back to get some more sleep.

The lawyer, who is more than a little miffed, wakes the blonde and asks, "Well, what's the answer?"

Without a word, the blonde reaches into her purse, hands the lawyer \$5.00, and goes back to sleep.

(Caught you stereotyping blondes didn't it? Shame on you!)

A father spoke to his son, "It's time we had a little talk, my son. Soon, you will have urges and feelings you've never had before. Your heart will pound and your hands will sweat. You'll be preoccupied and won't be able to think of anything else." He added, "But don't worry, it's perfectly normal... It's called 'golf'."