

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION
NAPO's 40th Annual National Convention, 2018

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF STATE COVERAGE OF MENTAL HEALTH
BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS**

WHEREAS, According to the National Study of Police Suicides, officers are 2.5 times more likely to die from suicides than from homicides; and

WHEREAS, State and local law enforcement officers are our nation's first responders. They respond to our country's greatest tragedies as well as violent crimes that unfortunately occur more frequently in our communities. They have seen and experienced horrors that they cannot forget, yet they still put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve our communities; and

WHEREAS, 13 states refuse to award compensation for PTSD altogether and 16 states award compensation but only if the PTSD was caused by an "unusual" event or occurred suddenly, which rules out many of the stresses experienced by law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, On March 7, 2018, Florida joined the 20 states that fully cover PTSD, enacting a law that would cover PTSD under worker's compensation, allowing first responders to get medical coverage and cover lost wages for PTSD; and

WHEREAS, On April 23, 2018, Arizona joined the ranks of those states that recognize PTSD as a public safety job-related injury in passing a law that provides public safety personnel with 36 visits to a licensed treatment professional, compensation for time spent in treatment, and restoration of leave time used because of PTSD.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, That NAPO strongly believes that PTSD must be recognized as a line of duty, compensable condition under state law and we will continue to support efforts at the local, state and federal level to ensure public safety officers have unfettered access to mental health benefits. It is time that every state recognizes the stress and strain of the job and give public safety officers the support and resources they need to address their emotional and mental wellbeing.

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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EXTENDING BASIC COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
RIGHTS TO ALL PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS**

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, NAPO firmly believes that law enforcement officers, who put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect our nation and its communities, should be granted the basic American right to sit down and discuss workplace issues with their employers; and

WHEREAS, History shows that denying workers the right to bargain collectively causes poor morale, the waste of resources, unfair and inadequate working conditions, and low productivity. It is ultimately the public's safety and security that is jeopardized by poor working conditions for public safety officers; and

WHEREAS, The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (H.R. 4846 / S.2845) will guarantee the rights of law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical service workers in all 50 states to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions, without preempting states statutes that offer equal or greater collective bargaining rights; and

WHEREAS, NAPO has been fighting to pass the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act since we worked to introduce it over 20 years ago, and we believe that it is now more important than ever to pass this legislation in the face of the Supreme Court's *Janus v. AFSCME* decision.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, That NAPO urges Congress to recognize that public safety is best protected through effective partnerships between first responders on the front lines and the agencies that employ them and make this vital legislation a federal law.

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RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENTAL PENSION PLANS

WHEREAS, Public pensions are vitally important to the retirement security of American workers, serving more than 14 million current employees; and

WHEREAS, Defined benefit (DB) public pension plans are continually under attack by opponents who want to replace them with 401(k) defined contribution plans under the guise it will save state and local governments money. Opponents to DB pension plans do not realize the economic damage their actions would inflict on the local, state and federal economies; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Palm Beach, Florida found out the hard way when they dismantled their DB pension plan for public safety officers and offered a defined contribution plan with dramatically lower benefits to their police officers and firefighters. The result was a mass exodus of experienced officers from the town and increased costs and economic losses as Palm Beach worked to rebuild its police and fire departments; and

WHEREAS, Public pension distributions not only provide financial security to retirees and their survivors, but also, through consistent and protected revenue streams flowing into our nation's communities, they have provided vital economic stability and stimulus; and

WHEREAS, Pensions are the most economically efficient way to fund an adequate retirement, making them a good use of taxpayer dollars. Studies conducted by states have concluded that providing retirement benefits through DB pension plans achieves the goal of fiscal responsibility for both employers and taxpayers, and retirement security for employees¹; and

WHEREAS, State and local public pension systems have weathered numerous market declines in the past, and governments, their plans and their employees have already worked together to do so once again and ensure a sustainable path forward; and

WHEREAS, Governmental pension plans provide a model that should be emulated, not used to provoke fear, or dismissed as obsolete, particularly given the growing number of private-sector workers who will have no income security in retirement.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, That NAPO urges state and local governments – as well as Congress – to recognize that traditional governmental pension plans are cost effective, efficient, create value, and help workers attain a modest, stable retirement, and therefore, are the best way to provide retirement benefits to their employees.

¹ NRTA Pension Education Toolkit, *Public Pension Fact Sheet*. 2017. <https://www.nirsonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/executivesummary.pdf>

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**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL PRISON REFORM ON
STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES AND CRIME RATES**

WHEREAS, Major cities across the country are facing an increase in violent crime for the first time in years. According to the FBI's latest Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2016*, the number of violent crimes, including murder, aggravated assaults and rapes, increased for the second straight year; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Justice released a report in May regarding recidivism rates for state prisoners that found that 83% of state prisoners released in 2005 across 30 states were arrested at least once during the 9 years following their release. The study, *2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period (2005-2014)*, also found that 77% of released drug offenders were arrested for a non-drug crime within nine years, and 34% were arrested for a violent crime; and

WHEREAS, While states claim that the prison reforms they enacted have led to lower state prison populations and some savings for the state, the result has been increased stresses on local and county budgets and resources as those prisoners who were once wards of the state increase crime in our communities, fill county jails and flood community services; and

WHEREAS, On May 22, 2018, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Formerly Incarcerated Reenter Society Transformed Safely Transitioning Every Person (FIRST STEP) Act (S. 2795 / H.R. 5682), a bill that tries to do too much at once, and consequently, would negatively impact public safety. States and localities would become the dumping ground for federal criminals due to retroactive increases in good time credits and mandatory program participation credits; and

WHEREAS, The FIRST STEP Act does not contain the safeguards, support and resources to states and localities that would be necessary for communities to handle the influx of newly released prisoners or deal with recidivism.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, That NAPO is opposed to any blanket prison reform policies that do not address the concerns or meet the needs of the law enforcement community. Significant changes to our nation's correctional system should first be thoroughly studied and must include the input of the federal, state and local public safety communities, which play an integral role in the system.

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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENSURING LAW ENFORCEMENT ARE GIVEN
THE TOOLS THEY NEED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST OPIOIDS**

WHEREAS, The nation is experiencing a significant drug crisis, which threatens the future of our youth and our country as a whole. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than 64,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2016 and opioids were involved in over 42,000 of those deaths; and

WHEREAS, Illicit fentanyl is so powerful — just a few salt-sized grains can kill an adult — that small amounts go a long way for drug traffickers and dealers. These relatively small and potent amounts mean fentanyl is difficult and hazardous to detect, making it easy to distribute and a danger to officers who encounter it on the street; and

WHEREAS, Opioids like fentanyl affect communities across the country, both big and small, and local law enforcement officers are on the front line in the fight against these drugs; and

WHEREAS, More and more agencies are finding the need to train officers on recognizing and responding to an opioid overdose and equipping their officers with naloxone and similar anti-overdose drugs to help prevent overdose deaths from heroin and other opioids; and

WHEREAS, The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is a key component in bringing federal, state, local, and tribal governments together and fostering law enforcement, treatment and prevention partnerships. The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program under ONDCP plays an essential role in the nation's drug control strategy and its success is due to its ability to seamlessly operate on local, regional, and national levels coordinating resources to address our nation's drug epidemic.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, That NAPO believes that state and local law enforcement must be given the training, resources and support necessary to keep officers and the communities they serve safe in the fight to end the opioid crisis. This includes funding for agencies to train and equip their officers with naloxone, a robust national strategy through ONDCP and a strong HIDTA Program. Additionally, we believe protections from civil liability should be given to officers who are authorized to administer anti-overdose drugs to ensure that they will not hesitate to administer these lifesaving drugs.