



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

December 13, 2018

MICHAEL McHALE
President
Florida Police Benevolent
Association

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

JOHN A. FLYNN
Vice President
Patrolmen's Benevolent
Association of New York City

Dear Senator:

TODD HARRISON
Recording Secretary
Combined Law Enforcement
Associations of Texas

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), a coalition of police units and associations from across the United States representing over 241,000 sworn rank-and-file law enforcement officers, I am writing to urge you to support Senators Tom Cotton and John Kennedy's Amendment I to the FIRST STEP Act (S. 3649). While NAPO still has grave concerns with the legislation before the Senate, the amendment from Senators Cotton and Kennedy is a step in the right direction towards ensuring the safety of our nation's communities.

SCOTT HOVSEPIAN
Treasurer
Massachusetts Coalition
of Police

NAPO believes that the FIRST STEP Act would greatly harm public safety. Even with the amendments to the list of exclusionary crimes, the bill provides significant early release benefits to federal offenders who have *committed serious violent crimes, such as assaulting a law enforcement officer, carjacking with the intent to cause death or serious bodily harm, and bank robbery by force or violence that puts a person's life in jeopardy*. The Cotton-Kennedy Amendment I to S. 3649 would address this issue by adding additional serious violent crimes to the bill's "ineligible prisoners" list, including assaulting a law enforcement officer with or without a deadly weapon (a majority of officer assaults are done without the use of a deadly weapon), assaulting an infant or child, and coercing a child to engage in prostitution or any sexual activity. It is vital that the FIRST STEP Act exclude the sex offenders and violent felons who commit these crimes to make certain they do not end up back in our communities, putting public safety at risk.

MARC KOVAR
Sergeant-at-Arms
New Jersey State Policemen's
Benevolent Association

CRAIG D. LALLY
Executive Secretary
Los Angeles Police
Protective League

MARK YOUNG
Vice President,
Associate Members
Detroit Police Lieutenants &
Sergeants Association

JAMES PALMER
Parliamentarian
Wisconsin Professional Police
Association

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON, CAE
Executive Director and
General Counsel

Even with the Cotton-Kennedy Amendment, we remained concerned with the fact that the FIRST STEP Act continues to give the greatest benefits to high-recidivism offenders -- most notably, drug traffickers, the most serious of whom also receive reduced mandatory minimum sentences under the bill. If history tells us anything, this will create more crime in our communities and impose a greater resource burden on law enforcement. **Make no mistake, if this legislation passes in its current form, law-abiding citizens and police officers will be assaulted, wounded and killed.**

Under this legislation, states and localities would become the dumping ground for violent federal criminals who would be granted "good time" credits and obtain early release. 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 literally *thousands* of newly released prisoners. As we have seen in states such as

California and Louisiana, the exodus from state prisons has resulted in increased stresses on local and county budgets and resources as those prisoners who were once wards of the state fill county jails and flood community services. The bill does not adequately address the impact the early release of these prisoners will have on our communities.

While NAPO supports true second chances that bring about the productive return of prisoners to their communities, we do not endorse the implementation of reckless reforms to our nation's criminal justice system that will harm public safety and lead directly to the injury and deaths of police officers and citizens alike. Such significant changes should first be thoroughly studied and must include the input of the federal, state and local public safety community, which plays an integral role in the system.

To protect our nation's law enforcement officers and our public safety, NAPO urges you to support the Cotton-Kennedy Amendment I to S. 3649.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director