

# National Sheriffs' Association Newsletter: Capitol Watch

January 31, 2011  
Vol. 7, Issue 1

## On Capitol Hill

Congress has been working to establish various committee membership, as well as leadership positions since commencing in early January.

Additionally, the big agenda item in the last few weeks has been a Republican bill to repeal the universal healthcare law (passed in March 2010). While the Republicans were successful in passing the healthcare repeal, the repeal is unlikely to come up in the Senate.

The House remains in recess until the week of February 8<sup>th</sup>. The Senate will resume legislative business the week of January 31<sup>st</sup>.

President Obama delivered his annual State of the Union address on Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. Critical issues mentioned during the State of the Union were: job creation; education; energy changes; immigration; infrastructure, particularly regarding the nationwide broadband plan; healthcare; and reducing the national debt.

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## News & Updates



### Save the Date!

**NSA 2011 Annual  
Conference  
June 18-22, 2011**

**Cervantes Convention  
Center  
St. Louis, MO**

For more information, go  
to [www.sheriffs.org](http://www.sheriffs.org)

If you have any  
questions, please  
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or (703) 838-5316.

## Introduced in Congress

Reps. Bob Latta (R-OH) and Tim Holden (D-PA) have reintroduced the State and Local Law Enforcement Hatch Act Reform Act of 2011 (HR498). Current cosponsors include: Reps. Austria (R-OH); Connolly (D-VA); Dent (R-PA); Lee (R-NY); Lummis (R-WY); Pascrell (D-NJ); Rooney (R-FL); and Westmoreland (R-GA).

As you recall, the legislation would amend current law (5 U.S.C. §§ 1501-1508) known as the federal Hatch Act to: 1) allow state and local law enforcement officers to be a candidate for the Office of Sheriff—an elected Office—without being forced to quit their jobs; 2) clarify current law to allow sheriffs to endorse political candidates without fear of potentially violating the Hatch Act; and 3) establish a statute of limitations of one year to file a claim against a state or local law enforcement officer for alleged violation of the Act.

**Sheriffs:** Please continue to urge your U.S. House of Representatives to become cosponsors of **HR498 – the State and Local Law Enforcement Hatch Act Reform Act of 2011**. **Please remember:** the stronger the support from Members of Congress, the greater the ability to pass the legislation. A sample letter of support and fact sheet on the bill can be found **HERE**.

Please reach out to your U.S. Representative today and ask them to cosponsor HR498. The Congressional Offices can contact Bethany Peck (Rep. Latta) at [bethany.peck@mail.house.gov](mailto:bethany.peck@mail.house.gov) / (202) 225-6405 or Keith Pemrick (Rep. Holden) at [keith.pemrick@mail.house.gov](mailto:keith.pemrick@mail.house.gov) / (202) 225-5546 to sign onto the bill.

For any questions, please contact Stephanie Garlock, NSA, at (703) 838-5316 or [sgarlock@sheriffs.org](mailto:sgarlock@sheriffs.org)

## Allocation of D Block to Public Safety Continues to Make Progress

The public safety community received a huge boost forward in our goal to allocate the D Block to public safety, with the announcement from the White House of their support for allocation of the D Block to public safety over auctioning it. Additionally, the White House has pledged to provide the

funding necessary to create and implement a nationwide public safety mobile broadband network.

The announcement was made just hours before the President delivered his annual State of the Union address to the nation.

The fight for the allocation of the D Block is far from over however. Due to statutory requirements, the FCC is still legally required to auction the D Block unless Congress passes the necessary allocation legislation.

To help achieve this goal, Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) has reintroduced the Public Safety Wireless and Innovation Act of 2011 (S28). The legislation would not only allocate the D Block to public safety but would provide the funding necessary to create and implement a nationwide public safety mobile broadband network. Additionally, Rep. Peter King (R-NY) is slated to reintroduce companion legislation in the House in the coming weeks.

NSA continues to actively work with our public safety; state and local intergovernmental; and industry partners to urge members in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to support this critical legislation. Also, NSA will take part in a PSA (Public Safety Alliance) Legislative Week on Capitol Hill during the week of February 7<sup>th</sup> to educate Congress on this issue.

## **NSA Continues to Work Toward Introduction of Mentally Ill Legislation**

NSA continues to work actively toward the introduction of the Inmates with Mental Illness Treatment and Public Safety Act in Congress. The bill will be introduced by Reps. Dave Reichert (R-WA) and Jim McDermott (D-WA).

Currently, we are working out the final details of the bill, including the funding element. Once the legislation is introduced, NSA will be asking State Associations and Sheriffs to reach out to their Members of Congress and urge them to become cosponsors. Talking points and sample letters of support will be available upon the bill's introduction.

NSA will continue to keep you updated!

## **Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Gain New Leadership**

In late December 2010, the Senate confirmed both the nominees for the Director of the U.S. Marshals Service, Stacia Hylton; and the Administrator for the Drug Enforcement Administration, Michele Leonhart.

NSA congratulates both Director Hylton and Administrator Leonhart and look forward to working with both of them in their new roles.

Additionally, NSA has expressed our support for the nomination of Andrew Traver to become the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. To read our letter of support, please visit [www.sheriffs.org](http://www.sheriffs.org), under Congressional Correspondence on the Government Affairs page.

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