

National Sheriffs' Association Newsletter: Capitol Watch

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On Capitol Hill

Congress and the Administration are working behind the scenes to develop a compromise for a remaining FY11 CR. A short-term CR is currently in effect until April 8th. If some sort of compromise cannot be reached by midnight on April 8th, the federal government will shutdown.

Additionally, the House will attempt to pass a one-week CR extension to fund the government until April 15th, as well as to fund the Pentagon for the remainder of FY11.

While CR discussions continue, the House and Senate will take up several bills dealing with EPA regulations and small business.

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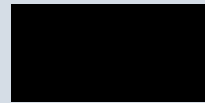
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Save the Date!

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

**America's Center
St. Louis, MO**

For more information, go
to www.sheriffs.org

If you have any
questions, please
contact Stephanie
Garlock at
sgarlock@sheriffs.org
or (703) 838-5316.

On March 30, the House Homeland Security Committee held a hearing entitled, “Public Safety Communications: Are the needs of our First Responders being met?”

NSA’s First Vice President Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald (Story County, IA) had the opportunity to testify on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association. In his testimony, Sheriff Fitzgerald stressed the critical need to allocate the D Block to public safety and provide the funding necessary to create and implement the nationwide public safety interoperable mobile broadband network. Furthermore, the Sheriff relayed the urgency to allocate the D Block this year – as the nation comes upon the 10-year anniversary of 9/11.

A copy of Sheriff Fitzgerald’s testimony can be found at www.sheriffs.org, under Testimony on the Government Affairs page.

Also testifying on behalf of the D Block were: William D. Carrow, President of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO), International; Chief Jack Parow, President and Chairman of the Board for International Association of Fire Chiefs; and Gregory Simay, At-Large Director for the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communication System. 18 Members of the Committee were in attendance at some point throughout the duration of the Hearing.

The fight is far from over. Until Congress passes legislation to allocate the D Block to public safety, the D Block still has the potential to be auctioned off.

NSA continues to strongly encourage sheriffs to reach out to their Members of Congress, both in the House and Senate, and urge them to become cosponsors to S. 28 and H.R. 607. These bills not only allocate the D Block to public safety, but provide the funding necessary to create and implement the nationwide public safety interoperable mobile broadband network.

To obtain sample letters of support on both bills or for talking points on the D Block issue, please click [HERE](#) or contact Stephanie Garlock at sgarlock@sheriffs.org or (703) 838-5316.

Clandestine Lab Clean-up Funding for State and Local Law Enforcement Still Non-Existent

As Congress continues to debate a CR for the remainder of FY11, clandestine lab clean-up funding for state and local law enforcement continues to remain non-existent.

As you recall, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) informed state and local law enforcement at the end of February that they were no longer able to provide funding to assist state and local clandestine lab clean-up nationwide.

Typically, DEA administers the funding for the clandestine lab clean-up on behalf of the COPS Program, specifically the COPS Meth Program. In FY10, Congress appropriated \$10M through the COPS Meth Program to be administered by the DEA for state and local clandestine lab clean-up. However, due to the fact that the budget for the remainder of FY11 has yet to be completed; and that there has been a significant need for this funding throughout the nation, the funding has run out and is currently NO money for this program.

DEA wants to help and is working hard to try to find a solution; however, at the current time, they do not have the financial resources necessary to provide assistance with state and local clandestine lab clean-up. Furthermore, the DEA has tried to identify other sources of funding to make up for the COPS shortfall. They have gone to several other agencies, but there is simply no money to spare.

Before the President's Day recess in late February, the House passed their version of the FY11 CR. In the House version, there is \$10M for clandestine lab clean-up. The Senate has yet to take up a FY11 CR; however, will be working on it in the coming weeks. The importance of funding clandestine lab clean-up at a state and local level has been relayed by NSA to Senate Appropriations staff and it is an issue that Senate Appropriations staff is closely examining.

However, we need sheriffs' help to ensure that the Senate not only includes the funding for COPS Meth Program, which enables the clandestine lab clean-up, in the FY11

CR, but increases the funding if possible. Meth labs have risen dramatically over the last several years and it is essential that DEA have the resources necessary through the COPS Meth program to enable the DEA state and local clandestine lab clean-up program to continue.

SHERIFFS: It is critical that you reach out to your Members of Congress – particularly your U.S. Senators; stress the importance of the state and local clandestine lab clean-up funding as provided by the COPS Meth Program; and urge that COPS Meth Program remains and is adequately funded in the FY11 CR. Additionally, it is important that you reiterate the dangers that meth labs pose to your community and the dangers that these labs pose when law enforcement is unable to clean them up.

For a sample letter to your Senators, please click [HERE](#) or contact Stephanie Garlock at sgarlock@sheriffs.org or (703) 838-5316.

NSA is closely monitoring both the FY11 CR and the clandestine lab funding issue, and working with both our law enforcement and Congressional partners to find a solution to this critical issue. NSA will continue to keep you abreast of any new developments.

As a side note, \$0 funding was proposed by the President's FY12 budget for this clandestine lab program. NSA will be working with our law enforcement partners to ensure Congress appropriates funding for this critical program for FY12.

DEA to Hold Second Annual Drug Take-Back Day on April 30th

Once again, the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) has expressed our strong support for the national prescription drug "Take-Back" day. The initiative, spearheaded by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), seeks to prevent increased prescription medication abuse and theft, while educating the country on this growing epidemic.

The Nationwide Prescription Drug "Take-Back" Day will occur on Saturday, April 30, 2010, from 10AM to

2PM local time. During this initiative, the DEA will be collecting potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs for destruction at sites nationwide, free and anonymously.

The first national take-back day, held in September 2010, was a huge success, with the participation of over 3,000 state and local law enforcement agencies nationwide and more than 121 tons of pills collected during the one day event.

Prescription drug abuse and theft has become an increasing problem throughout the United States, especially among our nation's youths. As sheriffs, it is our critical responsibility to do all that we can to educate our communities on the dangers of prescription drug abuse and misuse, and ensure the safety of all our citizens. The NSA strongly encourages sheriffs to participate in this vital initiative.

Sheriff's Offices who wish to participate or gain further information on the "Take-Back" initiative, are encouraged to visit www.dea.gov and click on the National Prescription Drug "Take-Back" Day icon. Additionally, a link to the National Prescription Drug "Take-Back" day can also be found at www.sheriffs.org.

LEGISLATIVE PUSH: Cosponsors Needed for Hatch Act Reform Bill

Sheriffs: It is imperative that you 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.**

Currently, there are 18 cosponsors; however, many more are needed in order to swiftly move the bill through the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee – the Committee of bill jurisdiction.

NSA is working with Rep. Latta to move the legislation forward in the 112th Congress. Your continued support is **VITAL** to our success.

Attorney General Holder Launches Law Enforcement Officer Safety Initiative

On March 22, United States Attorney General Holder launched a nationwide law enforcement officer safety initiative. The initiative directs every U.S. Attorney to meet with federal, state and local law enforcement officials in their districts to ensure that DOJ resources are made available to help reduce officer fatalities.

In his memo to the U.S. Attorneys, Attorney General Holder laid out immediate steps to take: (1) asking local prosecutors to identify the “worst of the worst” – offenders with criminal histories who cycle in and out of local jails and state prisons – and discuss whether any of these repeat offenders may be prosecuted under federal law for offenses that make the offender eligible for a stiffer sentence; (2) ensuring that state and local law enforcement partners are fully informed about the resources that the department makes available to help protect officers, such as: VALOR; RISSafe Officer Safety Event Deconfliction System; the Bulletproof Vest Partnership; and a new law enforcement officer safety “toolkit,” to be developed by the BJA; and (3) ensuring that all federal task forces are making effective use of de-confliction systems.

The Attorney General’s full memo can be found here: www.justice.gov/ag/AG_Officer_Initiative_3-22-11.pdf. and further information about the initiative can be found at the Department of Justice website: www.justice.gov .

NSA 2011 Annual Conference Fast Approaching

The National Sheriffs’ Association 2011 Annual Conference will be held from June 18-22 at the America’s Center in St. Louis, MO.

Keynote speakers for Annual are:

Opening General Session (Sunday, June 19)

- **Bob Delaney, NBA Referee and former NJ State Trooper**

General Session II (Monday, June 20)

- **John R. "JV" Venable, commander of the USAF Flight Demonstration Team Thunderbirds 2000-2001.**

Additionally, a variety of important seminars will be held during the conference, ranging from utilizing the media; body armour; first responder family preparedness; immigration

Furthermore, NSA's Annual Banquet will take place on Wednesday, June 22. The banquet is the finale to the Annual Conference. Events during the banquet include the swearing in of the newly elected NSA Board Members and NSA President.

For more information on NSA's 2011 Annual Conference including registration, hotels, and full conference agenda, please visit www.sheriffs.org on the Conference page.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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