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## NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION 2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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- **COPS PROGRAM (DOJ):** NSA urges Congress to retain \$1 billion for COPS Hiring Program in the Economic Recovery Package to hire 13,000 additional officers to address the increase in crime as we continue to face an economic crisis. NSA also strongly urges Congress Members to support the **COPS Improvement Act of 2009** to authorize the hiring of 100,000 additional officers (House version sponsored by Reps. Weiner and LaTourette; 50,000 officers in the Senate version, sponsored by Sens. Feinstein and Kohl).
- **BYRNE JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG) PROGRAM (DOJ):** Byrne JAG, a program recently authorized at \$1.1 billion, was drastically reduced in fiscal year 2008 to \$167 million. It is the only formula based program for local law enforcement and the backbone of many programs to control and prevent crime – vast majority of states use this funding to operate and fund officers for multi-jurisdictional drug and gang taskforces. NSA urges Congress to retain the \$1.5 billion for JAG in the Economic Recovery Package to restore funding for the drastic cuts in the recent fiscal years to prevent drug and gang taskforces across the country from shutting down.
- **SOUTHWEST BORDER (DOJ):** NSA urges Congress to retain \$100 million for the Southwest Border project in the Economic Recovery Package to provide assistance and equipment to local law enforcement along the Southern border or in High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas to combat criminal narcotic activity along the Southern border.
- **RURAL DRUG ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE (DOJ):** NSA strongly urges Congress to retain \$150 million in the Economic Recovery Package for law enforcement agencies in rural communities across the country to help them combat persistent problems of drug and gang-related crimes which are no longer limited to urban areas.
- **INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN (ICAC) (DOJ):** NSA strongly supports ICAC taskforces which help state and local law enforcement agencies to enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the Internet to

sexually exploit children. NSA urges Congress to retain the \$50 million for ICAC taskforces in the Economic Recovery Package.

- **STATE CRIMINAL ALIEN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SCAAP) (DOJ):** SCAAP is a reimbursement program for local governments that shoulder the costs associated with processing and detaining illegal aliens—which is a federal responsibility. NSA urges Congress to fully fund this program at the authorized level at \$950 million.
- **LAW ENFORCEMENT TERRORISM PREVENTION PROGRAM (LETPP) (DHS):** LETPP is the only program dedicated for local law enforcement agencies to enhance interoperable communications and information sharing to prevent terrorists from executing a threat. NSA urges Congress to fund this program as a stand-alone program rather than as an earmark out of other DHS programs.
- **COMMERCIAL EQUIPEMENT DIRECT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CEDAP) (DHS):** CEDAP helps local law enforcement to meet the equipment needs of smaller and rural jurisdictions by providing communications interoperability, information sharing, chemical detection, sensors, personal protective equipment, technology, and training in using the equipment, devices, and technology. NSA urges Congress to fund this program to help law enforcement agencies in non-urban areas to also be fully prepared during times of disaster.
- **287(G) PROGRAM FOR LOCAL LAW ENFORCMENT TO ENFORCE IMMIGRATION LAW (DHS):** NSA urges Congress to provide adequate funding for the 287(g) program to train local law enforcement officers to enforce immigration law. This program enables local law enforcement to offer assistance to federal law enforcement to meet the demands to control the border and enforce immigration laws.
- **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING:** NSA strongly opposes the **Public Safety Employee Employer Cooperation Act (H.R. 413)**, which would federalize collective bargaining for public safety officers, thereby forcing sheriffs and peace officers to adhere to strict guidelines when dealing with the public safety workforce. It creates a “one-size-fits-all” approach to collective bargaining for public safety officers. The needs of law enforcement agencies and their communities vary significantly depending on their size and locality. The Act fails to make this distinction, therefore doing law enforcement a great disservice. NSA believes that the decision to engage in collective bargaining should be solely left up to the states and localities.
- **COUNTY HEALTH CARE FOR INMATES:** NSA strongly supports legislation that would restore partnership between federal and county governments for inmate health care costs. Under current law, individuals who are inmates of a public institution are not eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and SCHIP benefits. Specifically, the cost of inmate medical care has become an increasingly heavy burden on the financial resources of the counties. NSA urges Congress to introduce legislation which would allow inmates

who are incarcerated and currently awaiting trial, to continue to retain their federal medical benefits. Such a measure is an important step forward to ensure that local governments do not continue to shoulder the burden of covering these medical expenses, but that we work as partners in fulfilling our obligation. Furthermore, the proposed measure would allow individuals in custody to maintain the continuity of health care when they are newly-released from custody.

- **AMENDING THE HATCH ACT:** NSA believes that the current Hatch Act needs to be amended as it applies to state and local government employees. Increasingly, in an election cycle, sheriffs and their deputies have been subjects of claims of potential violations of the federal Hatch Act—a federal law that is antiquated and obscure. The Hatch Act was enacted in 1939 to prevent federal employees from engaging in partisan politics and curtailing possible corruption, and then was amended in 1940 to apply to state and local government employees greatly restricting sheriffs and other law enforcement officers from engaging in various political activities. The Hatch Act is problematic in that it is overly broad and vague which places sheriffs, *an elected official*, unknowingly, in federal violation of the Act. NSA has formed a Hatch Act Subcommittee which will provide recommendations to Congress on potential amendments to this antiquated law.