



NNOAC *Insight*

The Official Position of the National Narcotic Officers' Associations Coalition

ABOUT THE NNOAC

Since the beginning of the most recent drug epidemic in the 1960's, law enforcement officers in many states have formed statewide narcotic officer associations. Most of these associations are involved in providing drug enforcement training for law enforcement officers and drug resistance education to the public. Additionally, most associations worked closely with their own state legislatures and criminal justice policy organizations to develop strong drug laws and policies. These associations have been responsible for enhancing the professionalism of narcotic enforcement.

Although many of the narcotic officers' associations were very successful in representing the needs of law enforcement officers within their own state, they realized that they were not especially effective in working with the Congress or Federal criminal justice policy agencies. It became apparent to the leadership of these state associations that they needed to come together as a combined group in order to effectively represent narcotic officers at our national capital.

During 1994, the funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial Program was removed from the Administration's budget request. This funding was crucial for the continuation of many local and state drug enforcement programs. This was the catalyst for the foundation of the National Narcotic Officers' Associations Coalition (NNOAC). The NNOAC was created in July of 1994 in Chicago, Illinois, when the leadership of many of the nation's state narcotic officers' associations came together as part of an effort to re-establish the Edward R. Byrne Memorial Fund. As a direct result of the NNOAC's efforts and the efforts of many other concerned groups, funding was restored to this vital program.

The NNOAC is currently comprised of 43 individual state narcotic associations, the six RISS projects, the National HIDTA Director's Association, and the National Drug Enforcement Officer's Association (NDEOA) representing more than 60,000 law enforcement officers from across the nation. The NNOAC serves as an umbrella organization, coordinating the efforts of these associations to address national issues in Washington D.C. Each member association appoints one delegate to represent them at the NNOAC Board meetings. With, "one association, one vote", every association receives equal representation regardless of the size of their association. The NNOAC is managed by an Executive Board, which consists

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of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Director. Those positions are elected from within the ranks of the appointed delegates. The President appoints committees such as membership, drug policy and web-site, as well as five regional directors to represent each region of the country.

The NNOAC represents its member associations by monitoring all relevant Federal legislation and policy. The Coalition focuses on domestic and international drug-related crime issues by developing and maintaining relationships with the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Regional Information Sharing System (RISS) and the National Guard Counter Drug Program as well as other relevant agencies and programs.

The NNOAC allows state and local narcotic officers' associations to work through their congressional delegations allowing for the unified voice in the nation's capital. The Coalition actively researches, monitors, and supports legislature initiatives designed to increase the effectiveness of narcotic enforcement and law enforcement in general.

Below is a list of NNOAC's goals and objectives:

- To ensure that the Edward R. Byrne Memorial Fund is fully funded in order to maintain the multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, which are the backbone of narcotics law enforcement.
- To maintain, increase, and intensify drug asset revenue sharing – the most important tool that narcotic law enforcement has today.
- To assist in the preparation of the National Drug Strategy.
- To place more emphasis on the domestic side of the drug strategy by increasing state and local level involvement on the direction taken in the fight against drugs
- To increase unification, networking, and act as a liaison for the exchange of information.
- To have an impact on legislation affecting narcotic officers and narcotic enforcement in the United States.
- To act as a conduit for the exchange of information, intelligence, and training guidelines affecting narcotic enforcement.
- To identify and refer members to quality training for narcotic law enforcement officers to ensure their safety and effectiveness.
- To act as a resource for states that want to establish a narcotics officers' association.

Over the past ten years, the NNOAC has been very successful in representing narcotic officers from its member associations. Our successes have included restoration of the full funding for the Edward Byrne Program in 1994, and providing support, which resulted in the passage of legislation regarding the ban of assault weapons, the Administration's Crime Bill. The NNOAC has participated in policy meetings and conferences with other law enforcement organizations and have been active participants in the preparation of ONDCP's National Drug Control

Strategy, the Department of Justice's National Methamphetamine Strategy, and DEA's National Heroin Strategy.

The NNOAC has also been responsible for increasing the awareness of the Administration and Congress regarding state and local drug enforcement issues. NNOAC delegates have testified before the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate on a variety of drug issues, including the Byrne hearings, asset forfeiture, minimum mandatory sentencing, medical marijuana, funding for the National Guard, and the Certification of Mexico. NNOAC delegates have also participated as briefing team members for congressional study trips. In addition, a member of NNOAC was part of the President's Law Enforcement Steering Committee, which consists of National law enforcement groups. This committee is responsible for advising the President on key law enforcement issues. NNOAC serves on the ONDCP committee to develop the National Drug Control Strategy, on the Advisory Committee for the Counter-Drug Intelligence Executive Secretariat for the implementation of the Central Counter-Drug plan. NNOAC also serves on the Law Enforcement Intelligence Forum (LEIF), which advises the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance on Regulations regarding the collection and distribution of criminal intelligence information and serves on the committee for National Model Drug Laws.

As the NNOAC continues to grow, so will its participation in the legislative and policy areas. To learn more about the NNOAC and our positions regarding Federal drug policy and legislation, please visit our web site at www.natlnarc.org.