



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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National Sheriffs' Association Disappointed by Attorney General Holder's Order on Civil Asset Forfeiture

Alexandria, VA - The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), representing the 3080 Sheriffs throughout the United States, issued a statement expressing both concern and dissatisfaction over the recent order by Attorney General Eric Holder that prohibits the federal adoption of seizures by state and local law enforcement.

The NSA, leaders in public safety, came together in Washington, DC yesterday to discuss their concern and deep frustration over the recent order issued by Attorney General Eric Holder. The order prohibits certain federal adoptions of seizures by state and local law enforcement. The Attorney General's unilateral decision will reduce law enforcement capability to respond to 911 calls and damages our work on major crimes, drug cases, human trafficking, and other threats to public safety that ultimately puts our public safety at risk. Equally troubling is that this decision puts law enforcement lives at risk by the continual barrage against law enforcement.

The National Sheriffs' Association, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Major Cities Chiefs Association reached out to Attorney General Holder with a "Proposed Reforms for Federal Civil Asset Forfeiture" prior to the order being released. The proposal included a letter urging Holder to proceed with caution before ending thousands of state and local forfeiture cases which are "a valuable tool in combatting serious wrongdoing." To terminate all adoptive cases for law enforcement agencies across the Nation without further documentation and a report would be a disservice to the public we are sworn to protect.

The NSA sees Attorney General Holder's decision as a historical shift toward continued erosion of drug enforcement by the federal government, and an emphasis on placing the financial burden on local authority, stressing local resources, and jeopardizing public safety. With the heightened threat status and recent concerns with the terrorist environment, law enforcement needs to be prepared to address whatever may come our way. By reducing our capabilities with an order such as this, we will see a reduction in our ability to serve and protect the citizens of this country. The National Sheriffs' Association provides the following points in support of the Civil Asset Forfeiture Program.

State and local law enforcement is a force multiplier for the federal government; civil asset forfeiture is one more tool in the law enforcement toolbox. The forfeiture funds allow state and local law enforcement to provide increased public safety.



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Without the federal adoption program and the support of the federal government, the result will be an impact on local taxpayers in the form of tax hikes. The funds recognized from the civil asset forfeiture program are used to provide local law enforcement with equipment, training, and to enhance officer safety.

Forfeiture of the cash and assets by drug traffickers has been a key component in slowing the flow of drugs both into and through this country. A few isolated instances of abuse in the civil asset forfeiture program should not form the basis for eliminating this 30-year-old program and will result in an increase in drug trafficking and drug related crime, a substantial portion of which is tied to terrorism.

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The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is one of the largest associations of law enforcement professionals in the United States, representing more than 3,000 elected sheriffs across the nation, and a total membership of more than 20,000. NSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising the level of professionalism among sheriffs, their deputies, and others in the field of criminal justice and public safety. Throughout its seventy-five year history, NSA has served as an information clearinghouse for sheriffs, deputies, chiefs of police, other law enforcement professionals, state governments and the federal government.