



Recognizing the Essential Public Safety Role of Private Security During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Private Security Officers are on the Front Line Everywhere in Maintaining Public Order and Security in the Current Crisis

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Washington, D.C., April 15, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- NASCO salutes security officers across the United States who are playing a crucial role in public safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic. There are over 1,000,000 private security officers in the United States, outnumbering public law enforcement personnel by a margin of more than two to one. As the current crisis severely strains law enforcement resources, private security companies and their dedicated, hardworking security officers increasingly are being relied upon to provide vital security and support, including maintaining social distancing and other health and safety requirements, at hospitals, government facilities, and essential businesses. They are also safeguarding non-essential businesses and other venues such as schools that have been closed but still require security. While such public-facing roles come with increased public exposure, security officers throughout the U.S. are showing up for duty every day.

Recognizing the essential nature of private security and private security officers during this crisis, the Department of Homeland Security/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency includes "personnel (front line and management)" in "private security" in the category of essential critical workers related to "Law Enforcement, Public Safety and Other First Responders". Also, included in that important category is "Security staff to maintain building access control and physical security measures."

In the United States, the vast majority of security officers are employed by contract private security companies. This means the security officers currently providing security and public safety services on-site at medical centers, critical infrastructure and manufacturing facilities, nursing homes, grocery and hardware stores – practically everywhere --- are not employees of those essential businesses. Nonetheless, it is those contract private security officers and their companies who are ensuring the safe, continued operation of those essential businesses. Their contributions are often overlooked by politicians and the media.

Accordingly, as Congress, the Federal government and state and local governments look to provide accommodations or premium compensation to essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the essential service role played by security officers and the essential business role played by private security companies cannot be overstated, nor overlooked.

It is also important that with law enforcement, first responders, and private security officers being sidelined by the coronavirus -- as security needs are increasing – that governmental entities maintain and facilitate the licensing and hiring of new security officers, and not impede them from going to work.

The National Association of Security Companies (NASCO) is the nation's largest contract security association whose member companies employ over 450,000 highly trained security officers across the United States.