

2023 NASCO Year in Review

From NASCO Executive Director Steve Amitay's Remarks at NASCO's 32th Annual Private Security Breakfast on Tuesday, September 12 at the ASIS GSX.

Now, I would like to give a review of NASCO's activities over the past year and our current initiatives. Organizationally, it's been another solid and active year. With NASCO's 18 members employing over 500,000 security officers across the nation, and with our active public profile, over the past year, NASCO was frequently sought out by federal and state officials and regulators, and the press, for input on private security related issues and legislation.

NASCO is also in very strong financial shape which enables us to fund state lobbying efforts and support legal and litigation efforts that serve the industry. NASCO is also an active participant in the U.S. Chamber Labor Relations Committee, the Littler Washington Policy Institute, the DHS Emergency Service Sector Coordinating Committee, SHRM, the International Association of Security Regulators, and various individual state security associations.

As for NASCO's recent and current activities, like last year, most of the action this past year has been at the State level. While at the Federal level, NASCO remains directly involved in certain issues and programs, such as legislation to obtain on-demand FBI checks for security officers, the Federal Protective Service Protective Security Officer Program, the aforementioned DHS Emergency Services Sector Coordinating Committee, and NASCO continues to support or be part of challenges to anti-employer federal labor rules, in terms of NASCO's ability to directly benefit the operations and bottom line of NASCO members, most of that action the past several years has been at the State level.

As I mentioned at last year's breakfast, in 2022, NASCO scored legislative wins in Florida (allowing for online training), Oklahoma (allowing for temporary licenses), Connecticut (easing the conditions of temporary licenses) and Tennessee (modifying potentially draconian training requirements that were added for security officers working at establishments serving alcohol.)

In 2023, NASCO scored a big win in Maryland on a bill that was passed that will mandate licensing, training and use of force reporting for security officers. The bill is a "game changer" as its licensing and training requirements will also be applicable to proprietary security officers in Maryland, not just contract security officers. Now, we are working with the MD State Police to implement the bill.

Elsewhere, NASCO continues to work with the Illinois Security Professionals Association in an effort to get statutory or regulatory changes made to make armed licenses portable in Illinois. When an armed officer in Illinois changes employers, he or she has to apply for a new license, a process that can take months to complete.

NASCO also continues to work with its lobbyist and NASCO members in Connecticut to deal with various licensing issues.

For possible future state activities, recently, I had a discussion with NASCO members operating in Arizona and about embarking on a possible lobbying effort there to try to improve licensing. We are also still considering an effort in Virginia to allow for online training. In Texas, where earlier this year, a law was enacted to require adding a personality test for armed guard licenses, and the legislature is often making changes related to private security, NASCO recently joined the state security association in Texas, ASSIST, and I look forward to start working with them.

Next year in Colorado, it is almost assured there will be a renewed attempt by legislators to pass a bill creating statewide licensing and training requirements for security companies and officers. In the first attempt a couple years ago -- which ultimately got sidetracked by procedural issues --- the substance of the legislation, drafted with no industry input, was, to put it mildly, not good. After discussions with the main sponsor pointing out the issues with the bill, the sponsor said that next time around he would work with industry on the language, so let's see.

Elsewhere in the States, NASCO and NASCO member continue to meet regular with D.C. regulators and progress is definitely being made on various licensing issues.

Finally, NASCO remained very involved in and supportive of the International Association of Security and Investigative Regulators.

Of greatest significance this year in terms of NASCO's activities at the State level is a move by NASCO to get involved with legislation related to premise liability negligent security litigation. In both Florida and Georgia, NASCO has retained lobbyists to assist in passing legislation to create or amend current laws that will provide liability limitations or otherwise aid security companies in such cases. With the rise of "nuclear" verdicts and settlements combined with a rise in tortious incidents -- such as parking lot shootings --- combined with the voraciousness of the plaintiff's bar, combined with insurance companies getting skittish about providing security related coverage or jacking up the rates for such coverage, the need to lessen a security company's exposure in negligent security lawsuit is a growing, almost existential, need. And it is a serious public safety issue if security companies will no longer be able to provide security at certain locations or in certain jurisdictions if insurance and liability costs are not reasonable.

At the federal level, it's generally the same priorities as last year. We continue to work with officials in the Federal Protective Service to make improvements to the Protective Security Officer Program which utilizes around 14,000-armed security personnel from federal contractors.

NASCO also plans to get the Private Security Officer Screening Improvement Act re-introduced in Congress. This NASCO drafted bill authorizes security companies to obtain, on demand, FBI checks of their security officers and applicants from a DOJ designated entity. The bill is a continual public symbol of the industry's commitment to security officer screening and vetting.

NASCO also remains involved with the DHS Emergency Services Sector Coordinating Committee, where a long-time topic, which seems to get more and more relevant, every year, is how to improve access for emergency service providers, including private security, to enter in disaster areas.

Finally, at the federal level, NASCO is monitoring labor and employment developments that can affect the industry such as the new NLRB Joint Employer Rule.

At the state and federal level, NASCO is working on behalf of its members, and the entire contract security industry, on an array of key issues, and, while it is in their best interest, I want to thank those NASCO member companies and their executives who are contributing their time and other resources to these efforts.