



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2020

**Contact:**

Kimberly J. Wagner, Executive Director

Email: [kwagner@mcsheriffs.com](mailto:kwagner@mcsheriffs.com)

Phone: 703-778-1381

### **ANNOUNCING NATIONAL FAITH AND BLUE WEEKEND:**

#### **A Public-Private Collaborative Effort to Build Bridges and Break Biases**

*Law Enforcement Unites with Faith Community for a Nationwide Weekend of Resolution and Reconciliation*

**Alexandria, VA** – The Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) along with other national law enforcement groups, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and MovementForward, Inc.'s One Congregation One Precinct (OneCOP) initiative are jointly organizing the most consolidated police-community engagement project in recent history - **National Faith and Blue Weekend (NFBW)** with **FirstNet, Built with AT&T** as its presenting sponsor. The mission of NFBW is to facilitate safer, stronger and more unified communities by connecting law enforcement officers and residents through local houses of worship.

“Finding common ground and ensuring justice for all starts with collaborative and respectful communication and the National Faith and Blue Weekend is evidence of leadership by example,” said Jason Porter, senior vice president, FirstNet Program at AT&T. “Through its mission focused and highly diverse group of faith-based and policing organization leaders, this initiative is laser focused on facilitating positive and actionable community relations between citizens and law enforcement across our Nation. As America’s public safety partner, it’s our honor to support this grassroots effort to strengthen police-community relations in neighborhoods across the country.”

As the nation continues to grapple with trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve in the wake of George Floyd’s death, this weekend will serve as NFBW’s first installation to address an urgent yet longstanding need for authentic collaboration between law enforcement and citizens.

“As sheriffs, we work alongside faith leaders in our communities every day. Both of our professions are vocations of service. Oftentimes, we tend to the same flock using the same skills - by listening, reassuring, and offering help,” said Middlesex County, MA Sheriff and MCSA President Peter J. Koutoujian. “The National Faith and Blue Weekend is a chance for our officers and ministers alike to reaffirm our commitment to serving every member of our communities.”

Collaborations between law enforcement and local groups – especially faith-based organizations – are invaluable force-multipliers for creating safer and more engaged communities. NFBW will positively impact Americans by directly engaging community influencers, residents and law enforcement professionals in every state across the U.S.

“Our pathway to progress around policing as a nation is a collaborative one that focuses on our commonalities rather than our differences,” says Reverend Markel Hutchins, National Lead Organizer, One Congregation One Precinct initiative (OneCOP) and President & CEO, MovementForward, Inc. “Because sixty million Americans

attend weekly gatherings at more than 350,000 houses of worship nationwide, nothing rivals the depth and breadth of influence presented by houses of worship who are unique and powerful gateways to the heart of communities in which they have a mutual interest in achieving effective police-community engagement.”

NFBW is slated for October 9 – 11, 2020 with planned activities such as community dialogues, service projects and other interactive experiences to help foster on-going, authentic and mutual community-law enforcement trust.

NFBW is an unprecedented national law enforcement-community engagement project involving nearly **every major national law enforcement group** in the United States of America along with the **three entities in the federal government that deal most directly with policing**. On April 27, 2020, led by Director Keith and Reverend Hutchins, the heads of each of the following organizations participated in the initial meeting:

- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, United States Department of Justice
- Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice
- Bureau of Justice Assistance, United States Department of Justice
- Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association
- Fraternal Order of Police
- Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- International Brotherhood of Police Officers
- International Conference of Police Chaplains
- Major County Sheriffs of America
- National Asian Peace Officers Association
- National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys
- National Association of Police Organizations
- National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives
- National Black Police Association
- National District Attorney’s Association
- National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- National Narcotics Officers’ Associations’ Coalition
- National Police Foundation
- National Sheriffs’ Association
- Police Executive Research Forum

For more information about National Faith and Blue Weekend, visit [www.faithandblue.org](http://www.faithandblue.org).

#### **ABOUT MAJOR COUNTY SHERIFFS OF AMERICA**

The Major County Sheriffs of America is a professional law enforcement association comprised of 103 of America’s largest Sheriff’s Offices. Collectively, MCSA member offices protect and serve 120 million Americans.

#### **ABOUT FIRSTNET BUILT WITH AT&T**

FirstNet is built with AT&T in a public-private partnership with the FirstNet Authority – an independent federal government agency. We continue to deliver on the vision of the first responder community and Congress. With dedicated, advanced services built to mission-critical standards interoperating across agencies and jurisdictions, custom apps and devices built for law enforcement, fire and EMS, it’s clear FirstNet stands above commercial offerings. And more than 12,000 public safety agencies and organizations – accounting for over 1.3 million connections – would agree.

FirstNet® and the FirstNet logo are registered trademarks and service marks of the First Responder Network Authority. All other marks contained herein are the property of their respective owners.

###