



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.E.  
WASHINGTON, DC 20002

**PATRICK YOES**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**JIM PASCO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

27 May 2020

The Honorable Nancy P. Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin O. McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker and Representative McCarthy,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 6509, the “Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act,” and to urge the House to pass it.

We knew at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that law enforcement officers on the front lines combating this pandemic would be increasingly vulnerable to contracting the virus. As we had feared, the virus has claimed the lives of many, and now includes a growing number of law enforcement officers. As of today, 112 law enforcement officers have died from COVID-19 related illnesses.

The Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) program provides that the surviving family members of a public safety officer who contracts an infectious disease in the line of duty and dies as a result of its contraction are eligible for the PSOB’s death benefit. With the help of the President and the Attorney General, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) announced on 9 April that a death benefit claim for a COVID-19 related death will be found by the BJA to have contracted the disease in the line of duty in most cases. This was a vitally important issue for our members on the front lines during this pandemic and this legislation would expand and codify this presumption.

In addition to the presumption for death benefit claims, H.R. 6509 would ensure that public safety officers who contract COVID-19 in the line of duty are eligible for benefits should they become disabled from the novel coronavirus. It would establish new standards for disability claims related to COVID-19 by defining “catastrophic injury” in cases where the injured officer was “permanently prevented from performing any gainful work as a public safety officer.” At a time of heightened risk from this pandemic, we believe this is necessary to ensure that these officers and their families, who are not able to “stay at home” during this crisis, will be taken care of in the event they are disabled and unable to continue to serve as law enforcement officers.

The legislation also recognizes the unique vulnerability of officers who were injured or disabled in the line of duty in relation to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and whose injuries—in



combination with a line-of-duty COVID-19 illness—rendered them disabled or caused their death will be eligible to receive the death or disability benefits under the PSOB program.

On behalf of the more than 351,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge the House to pass this measure and send it to the Senate. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Executive Director, Jim Pasco, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Yoes  
National President

cc: The Honorable Nancy P. Pelosi, Speaker of the House, U.S. House of Representatives  
The Honorable Kevin O. McCarthy, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives