



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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**PATRICK YOES**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**JIM PASCO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

5 May 2020

The Honorable David J. Trone  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Guy L. Reschenthaler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Trone and Reschenthaler,

I am writing on behalf of the 351,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 6694, the “Confidentiality Opportunities for Peer Support (COPS) Counseling Act.”

The job of a law enforcement officer is not easy. Some may feel like the weight of the world is on his or her shoulders, given that the job description has expanded to include the role of therapist, marriage counselor, addiction specialist, and spiritual advisor. Law enforcement officers, unfortunately, see the very worst of humanity, with some statistics suggesting that a police officer will experience more traumatic events in six months than the average person will experience in a lifetime. In 2017, 140 officers took their own lives. In contrast, 46 officers died after being fatally shot in the line of duty that same year—nearly 67% less than the number of suicides.

In 2018, the FOP partnered with NBC New York to conduct an important survey of our members with the aim of learning more about the critical stress that officers face on the job. We wanted to gauge the level of difficulties officers are facing, often struggling in silence, and we wanted to bring light to these issues not only to raise awareness, but to learn how we can best help our nation’s heroes remain well and productive in their lives and careers. Some of the key findings from law enforcement officers included:

- *90% report stigma as a barrier to seeking treatment;*
- *79% report experiencing critical stress at some point during their career; and*
- *73% reported that they view peer support as the most helpful of treatments.*

Peer support programs serve a valuable role in providing mental health to law enforcement officers, however, confidentiality concerns have left them underutilized. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) within the U.S. Department of Justice recommended improving “legislative privacy protections for officers seeking assistance from peer crisis lines and other peer-support programs.”

Your legislation reduces the barriers for law enforcement officers when trying to access mental health resources. By increasing the level of confidentiality for individuals seeking peer support counseling,

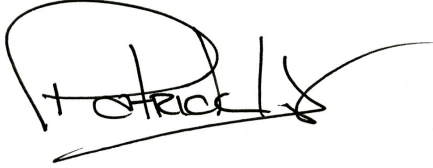
-- BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION --



our nation's everyday heroes will be better equipped to address a personal or professional crisis and to protect and serve their communities.

On behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I am proud to offer our support for this legislation. 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

