



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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

PATRICK YOES
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

6 May 2020

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Corey A. Booker
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Grassley and Booker,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for S. 3607, the "Safeguarding America's First Responders Act."

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 of today, 92 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, but under current law, the claim must establish that the exposure occurred in the line of duty. Given the insidious nature of this novel coronavirus, this places an unnecessary burden on the claimant. The bill you have introduced will codify and strengthen the existing guidance from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)—guidance which the FOP secured with the help of the President and the Attorney General earlier last month.

Your legislation will establish a presumption that a law enforcement or other public safety officers who dies from COVID-19 or complications related to COVID-19 did so because they sustained a personal injury in the line of duty, provided that the officer engaged in line of duty actions between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021. We believe this statutory change is necessary to ensure that the families of these officers will be taken care of in the event their loved one succumbs to COVID-19.

On behalf of the more than 351,000 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,

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader, United States Senate

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