



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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## **LAW ENFORCEMENT MENTAL HEALTH BILL PASSES HOUSE** *FOP Crafted Bill to Improve Mental Wellness of Police Officers*

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, was proud to announce that the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2228, the "Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act" under suspension of the rules by voice vote. The bill was sponsored by Representatives Susan W. Brooks (R-IN) and Valdez V. Demings (D-FL).

"This bill came to be when Senators Joe Donnelly and Todd Young reached out to us to see what more could be done to help law enforcement officers struggling to cope with the stresses of their profession," Canterbury explained. "We worked with them to craft a bill, S. 867, which, with their help, passed the Senate earlier this year. We're also grateful to Representatives Brooks and Demings who worked so closely with us to get the bill through the House today."

The House companion measure cleared the Judiciary Committee in October. The FOP led an effort to defeat a harmful, last-minute amendment pushed by the National Sheriffs' Association, which opposed the bill as introduced.

"Our officers wear protective clothing and other equipment to keep themselves safe from physical harm, but these officers also face challenges to their mental health and well-being. Unlike many other professions, sometimes you can't leave the job at the office and we need to do a better job of supporting our officers and their mental health," Canterbury said.

The legislation directs the U.S. Attorney General to identify existing mental health and wellness programs administered by the Federal government including those in the U.S. Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs. This information will then be compiled into a report to Congress which will contain best practices and model policies which could be adopted by State, local and tribal law enforcement agencies in an effort to improve their own mental health services for their officers. The bill would also authorize the establishment of pilot peer mentoring programs and review existing crisis hotlines for law enforcement officers.

"The FOP has been a leader on mental wellness for law enforcement officers and we believe we can provide better support for the men and women behind the badge," Canterbury said. "We are proud to support the 'Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act' and look forward to getting this bill through the Senate and then to the President's desk."

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States with more than 330,000 members in every region of the country.

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