



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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PATRICK YOES
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9 December 2019

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairman and Representative Burgess,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our continued support for H.R. 4527, the “Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act,” which is one of several bills to be considered at the subcommittee’s hearing entitled: “Proposals to Achieve Universal Health Care Coverage.”

We share the perspective of many Members of this Committee that our nation can improve the access to health care and we are pleased that the Committee has included H.R. 4527 in this hearing. The FOP is particularly concerned with the tens of thousands of law enforcement officers who are left without coverage when they retire. Due to the physical demands of our profession, law enforcement and other public safety officers often retire earlier compared to those in other occupations. In fact, many local, State and Federal agencies have mandatory retirement ages for law enforcement officers. These retirees may lose their employer-provided health insurance upon or shortly after their retirement—a time when they are years away from being eligible for Medicare.

The “Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act” legislation remedies this problem by allowing law enforcement and other public safety professionals the option to buy into Medicare at the age of 50. The U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services would establish the premiums based on the risk pool for those public safety officers who opt into the program as a separate population, but they would remain eligible for tax credits and cost-sharing subsidies to help them purchase insurance. When the officer reaches the age of 65, he or she would be seamlessly entered into the traditional Medicare program.

We believe this legislation addresses a very real and critical need for the men and women who served their communities as public safety officers by providing them with a bridge of coverage following their retirement until they reach Medicare eligibility. The Committee may not untangle the Gordian knot of universal healthcare in this hearing or the next, but we know that enacting H.R. 4527 will help retired law enforcement officers keep their access to healthcare following their decades of public service.

--BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION--

On behalf of the more than 349,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. If I can be of any further assistance to you, 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 "H. STRICK", with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

National President