



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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PATRICK YOES  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## An Open Letter to Our Nation's Governors

31 March 2020

Dear Governors,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police in your State to urge you to amend your State and local workman's compensation laws through executive or legislative action and establish a presumption that law enforcement officers who contract the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) did so in the line of duty.

Many Governors have already done this, and we are calling on those who have not to do so expeditiously. The National FOP is very concerned with the occupational safety and health of law enforcement officers during the National Emergency. At the Federal level, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration considers an *injury* or *illness* to be work-related if an event or exposure in the work environment either caused or contributed to the resulting condition or significantly aggravated a pre-existing condition. We have asked the U.S. Department of Labor to establish a presumption for law enforcement officers who contract COVID-19 as an Occupational Illness and be covered under Workers' Compensation. However, more than 90% of law enforcement officer will be responding from local and State agencies and we know they will be exposed to the illness at a higher rate than the public due to their day-to-day work, especially considering very few have been issued adequate (if any) personal protective equipment (PPE). All law enforcement agencies at every level of government will see their workforce diminished by illness and/or quarantine protocols.

While COVID-19 is without a doubt a public health crisis, it is also a public safety concern, as the spread of the virus will have an impact on public safety operations from simple things like answering emergency calls for service from infected or potentially infected persons, to enforcing quarantines, stay-at-home orders and restrictions on travel as well as protecting vital supplies and facilities. Our members, deemed "essential" by government at every level, will be on the front lines and they deserve every assurance that any future workman's compensation claim that is related to COVID-19 will presume they were exposed while they were in the line of duty.

Thank you to the Governors who have already taken this step—your support for the men and women in law enforcement is deeply appreciated. We urge all other Governors to follow your lead.

On behalf of the more than 350,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you for considering this urgent request. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco if you should need our help or support in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes". The signature is stylized with a large, rounded initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Patrick Yoes  
National President