



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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**PATRICK YOES**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**JIM PASCO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Another Open Letter to Our Nation's Governors

10 April 2020

Dear Governors,

I am writing to you again on behalf of the members of the National Fraternal Order of Police as well as our members 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. For States that have public safety officer death or disability programs, I urge that they also be amended to presume that any death or disability related to COVID-19 be duty related.

Yesterday, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the component of the U.S. Department of Justice that administers the Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program, announced that a death benefit claim for a COVID-19 related death will be found by the BJA to have contracted the disease in the line of duty in most cases.

Similarly, the U.S. Department of Labor has made changes to the procedures in the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) and will accept that the exposure to COVID-19 was proximately caused by the nature of the employment if the employee is a law enforcement officer or deemed to be in "high risk employment."

Many of our nation's Governors and State Legislatures have already taken these steps and to you, we are profoundly grateful.

In States where these steps have not been taken, we urge swift executive or legislative action. The National FOP is very concerned with the occupational safety and health of law enforcement officers during the National Emergency and, sadly, we are losing officers to this terrible disease. These losses are expected to continue as law enforcement officers are exposed to the virus at a higher rate than the public due to their day-to-day work and, even now, they are working without adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). All law enforcement agencies at every level of government are seeing their workforce diminished by illness and/or quarantine protocols.

With more than 90% of law enforcement officers serving at the local and State level, the issues of public safety death or disability benefits and workman's compensation must be addressed at the State level. We are calling on you to provide that leadership.

This pandemic is both a public health and public safety crisis. Our members, deemed "essential" by government at every level, are putting their lives and their health in harm's way and they deserve every assurance that any future workman's compensation or similar claim that is related to COVID-19 will presume they were exposed while they were in the line of duty.

We are deeply grateful to the Governors and State Legislatures who have already taken these steps—your support for the men and women in law enforcement is appreciated. We urge all other Governors to follow your lead and to do so quickly.

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 in our Washington, D.C. office if you should need our help or support in your efforts.

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