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11 December 2020

The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James D. Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Representative Jordan,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for H.R. 8772/S. 2174, the "Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act," and to urge the Committee on the Judiciary to consider and pass this legislation as the Senate did.

Since 1998, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has found thousands of unidentified human remains in the deserts surrounding our southern border. The process of then identifying these remains usually falls on local jurisdictions, including State and local law enforcement agencies, that lack the resources and staff needed to properly identify these remains. This not only burdens State and local law enforcement but leaves families without answers about their missing loved ones. Furthermore, while the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) collects information on thousands of unidentified remains every year, there is still a challenge to identifying these remains due to the lack of family reference data in NamUs.

The "Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act" would address these issues by expanding the eligibility for grants that can be used by State and local governments to identify remains and to enter information into CODIS and NamUs. This will help ensure that local jurisdictions, including State and local law enforcement, will have the resources needed to identify these remains and solve missing persons cases. The bill also improves data collection by requiring unidentified remains to also be reported to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and by adding privacy protections for biological family reference samples that are uploaded into CODIS. In an effort to decrease the number of individuals dying along our southern border, the bill also authorizes the purchase and deployment of 170 new 9-1-1 cellular relay rescue beacons. This piece of legislation will help save lives and give State and local law enforcement much needed resources to identify remains found along our southern border.

On behalf of the more than 356,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I am proud to offer our support for this legislation and urge the committee to pass it. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Yoes
National President

--BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION--

