



PATRICK YOES
National President

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE NE, WASHINGTON, DC 20002

JIM PASCO
Executive Director

24 September 2020

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne G. Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 2051

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Feinstein,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to urge the Committee on the Judiciary to consider and favorably report S. 4605, the “Protect and Serve Act.” This legislation would impose Federal penalties on individuals who deliberately target local, State or Federal law enforcement officers with violence in specific circumstances.

Our country has faced numerous challenges in the past 12 months, especially in policing. The FOP has been working and continues to work cooperatively with both the majority and minority on police reform in the House and Senate. We still believe that we can make progress on issues like the “Protect and Serve Act,” where there is broad and bipartisan support. In the previous Congress, this same legislation was unanimously passed by your House counterparts on the Judiciary Committee and then passed on an overwhelming 382-35 vote on the House floor.

Last week, two deputies of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) were ambushed. This week, three plainclothes officers in Philadelphia were ambushed by a pair of gunmen. One of the Philadelphia officers was saved by his soft body armor.

These are just the most recent examples of why this legislation is so critical for the safety and morale of our nation’s law enforcement officers. Eighteen percent (18%) of the officers killed by gunfire in 2019 died as a result of an ambush. So far this year, 233 officers have been shot in the line of duty, 36 of whom died. Thirty-three law enforcement officers have been shot in 27 ambush attacks this year, seven of whom were killed. The lethality of these attacks would be much greater but for dramatic improvements in medical trauma science and anti-ballistic technology.

These types of attacks, and violence targeting law enforcement officers in general, have been steadily increasing in recent years. A recent report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) concluded: “While the overall number of officers who were feloniously killed was declining, the percentage of officers feloniously killed during surprise attacks was increasing.” A December 2017 study by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), which examined law

enforcement officer fatalities from 2010-2016, found that 20% of ambushed officers were seated in their patrol cars and 56% of officers killed in an ambush were not on a call or engaged in any enforcement activity. Many of these officers were simply eating, sitting on post, or were targeted and killed while at their home or on their way home.

Despite this, apart from the House floor vote in 2018 on the “Protect and Serve Act,” Congress has done nothing to address the national problem of ambushes, unprovoked attacks, and targeted violence against our nation’s law enforcement officers. Today, we are calling on the Committee on the Judiciary to consider and pass the “Protect and Serve Act” to protect officers like those in Los Angeles County and Philadelphia, as well as the seven fallen heroes who were ambushed and killed by cowardly murderers:

Officer Kaulike Kalama
Honolulu Police Department, Hawaii

Trooper Joseph Jon Bullock
Florida Highway Patrol, Florida

Officer Tiffany-Victoria Bilon Enriquez
Honolulu Police Department, Hawaii

Corporal Andrew J. Gillette
Sumter County Sheriff’s Office,
South Carolina

Police Officer Nick O’Rear
Kimberly Police Department, Alabama

Sergeant Ricardo Perez-Ortiz
Puerto Rico Police Department, Puerto Rico

Sergeant Damon Gutzwiller
Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office, California

To be in law enforcement is to put yourself in harm’s way, but no officer should be at risk while simply sitting in their patrol car, standing a post, or heading for home at the end of a shift. When a member of the public calls for help, we answer that call. We are asking for your help now, and we urge this Committee to consider the “Protect and Serve Act” and send it to the floor for a vote.

On behalf of the more than 355,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you for considering the FOP’s urgent request to consider S. 4605. If I can provide any additional support for this bill or on any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,



Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader, United States Senate