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PSOB Reform Legislation Passes Senate

FOP-backed amendments included in final bill

Chuck Canterbury, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, was very pleased that the Senate passed S. 2944, the “Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) Improvements Act,” last night by unanimous consent.

“The Public Safety Officers’ Benefits program is very important to law enforcement and the wider public safety community,” Canterbury said. “It gives our members peace of mind because they know their families will be taken care of in the event they are killed or disabled in the line of duty.”

The legislation, authored by Judiciary Committee Chairman Senator Charles E. Grassley (R-IA), addresses existing problems at the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) Office with respect to transparency and accountability. The FOP was an early supporter of the bill and worked with Members of the Committee—Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), Ranking Member, and Senator John Cornyn III (R-TX) to craft amendments all of which were retained in the bill that passed the Senate.

“The backlog of PSOB claims is unacceptable,” Canterbury said. “The FOP believes that this legislation, as well as two recent regulatory changes which will go into effect before the end of the year, will help address this and other issues, which have been plaguing the program over the last few years.”

The legislation requires the PSOB Office to regularly report to Congress about the PSOB claims. Statutory changes in the bill will ensure that children of claimants will not “age out” of their eligibility because the claims were not processed in a timely fashion and that PSOB does not abandon claims which could not be determined because of a lack of information from a third party, like the employing agency. These changes will apply to all pending claims in addition to those filed in the future.

“The bill will now go to the House for further consideration,” Canterbury said. “Time is very short, but we’re cautiously optimistic that the House will act before adjournment.”

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States with more than 330,000 members.

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