



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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## **Senate Passes Vital Legislation During National Police Week** *Addresses Law Enforcement Officer Suicides and Deaths Due to COVID-19*

Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, applauded news that the United States Senate considered and passed three bills strongly supported by the FOP during National Police Week.

Two of the bills, S. 2746, the “Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act,” and S. 3434, the “Confidentiality Opportunities for Peer Support (COPS) Counseling Act,” were introduced by Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and passed by unanimous consent. Both bills would enhance efforts to assist our law enforcement officers with mental health and wellness. The first would establish a program to collect data on law enforcement and former law enforcement suicides at the local, State, and Federal level. The second bill would reduce the barrier for law enforcement officers who try to access mental health resources by increasing the level of confidentiality for individuals seeking peer support counseling.

“Law enforcement officers, unfortunately, see the very worst of humanity with some statistics suggesting that a police officer will experience more traumatic events in six months than the average person will experience in a lifetime,” said Yoes. “We know that officers in crisis need help, but the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act will give us the information we need to be successful in our efforts to help them. Peer support programs serve a valuable role in providing mental health to law enforcement officers and with the COPS Counseling Act, we’ll be able to ensure that our heroes will be better equipped to address a personal or professional crisis and to protect and serve their communities.”

The Senate also passed S. 3607, the “Safeguarding America’s First Responders Act,” which was introduced by Senators Charles E. Grassley (R-IA) and Corey A. Booker (D-NJ). This legislation would establish a presumption that law enforcement or other public safety officers who die or become disabled from COVID-19 or complications related to COVID-19 did so because they sustained a personal injury in the line of duty, provided that the officer engaged in line-of-duty actions between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021.

“We knew at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that law enforcement officers on the frontlines combating this pandemic would be increasingly vulnerable to contracting the virus—as of today, 105 law enforcement officers have died due to COVID-19,” said Yoes. “This legislation ensures that our officers who contract COVID-19 in the line of duty are eligible for benefits should they die or become disabled from the virus. At a time of heightened risk from this pandemic, we believe this is necessary to ensure that these officers and their families, who are not able to ‘stay at home’ during this crisis, will be taken care of in the event they are disabled and unable to continue to serve as law enforcement officers.”

All three bills will be transmitted to the U.S. House of Representatives for further action.

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 351,000 members.

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