



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

PATRICK YOES NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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10 August 2023

The Honorable John P. Joyce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Joyce,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to ask you, as a Member who lost an officer to violence in the line of duty, to cosponsor H.R. 743, the "Protect and Serve Act."

On 17 June, a man named Brandon Stine set out to shoot and kill a law enforcement officer. Tragically, he succeeded. The cop-killer first opened fire on patrol cars at the Pennsylvania Troopers barracks in Lewistown with a high-caliber hunting rifle before withdrawing from the scene. During the manhunt for the shooter, Lieutenant James A. Wagner, station commander for Pennsylvania State Troopers Troop G/Bedford Station, was shot from ambush with the same weapon and critically injured. He was evacuated by a Life Lion helicopter and, thankfully, survived—in fact, he was recently released from the hospital after more than a month of treatment.

Trooper Jacques F. Rougeau, Jr. was not as fortunate. Hearing that his barracks had been attacked, Trooper Rougeau, who was off-duty that day, showed up to join the manhunt for the armed and dangerous suspect who nearly killed one of his fellow troopers. While engaged in the search, he was ambushed and killed by a shot through his vehicle's windshield. His murderer was later located, engaged by other troopers in a huge firefight, and killed without further injury to any officers or bystanders.

The shootout was described by Lieutenant Colonel George Blevins as "a warzone" with hundreds of rounds fired and as "one of the most intense, unbelievable gun fights I have ever witnessed." He added the body armor worn by the troopers during the encounter would have been useless against the shooter's rifle, meaning that any officer engaged in the shootout could have been killed.

In response to the surge of violence targeting law enforcement officers in the form of calculated and ambush-style attacks, like the kind which resulted in the death of your Trooper Rougeau, the FOP is urging the House to consider legislation that would make it a Federal crime, in certain limited circumstances, to deliberately target law enforcement officers with violence. In 2018, this same bill passed in the House on an overwhelming 382-35 vote. Your predecessor, Representative William F. Shuster, voted for the bill on the House floor.

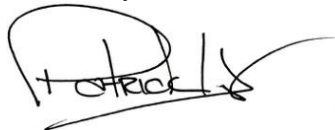
So far this year, 81 officers have been shot in ambush-style attacks and 14 officers, including your Trooper Rougeau, were killed. This is a stark reminder that our law enforcement officers are not just in harm's way due to the dangerous nature of their profession, but that they are also the targets of violent individuals whose sole motivation is to injure or kill a law enforcement officer.

Ambush-style attacks and violence targeting law enforcement officers have been steadily increasing in recent years. A May 2019 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."¹ A December 2017 study by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 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.²

Considering these chilling facts and the loss of your State Trooper, we are asking you to cosponsor H.R. 743 to address the national problem of ambushes and unprovoked attacks on our nation's law enforcement officers. No officer should be at risk of being targeted while simply sitting in their patrol car, standing post, or heading 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 urge you to cosponsor this bill so that we can once again send it to the House floor for a vote.

On behalf of the more than 367,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you for considering the FOP's urgent request to cosponsor H.R. 743. If I can provide any additional information about this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Yoes
National President

¹ <https://info.publicintelligence.net/FBI-AmbushesUnprovokedAttacks.pdf>

² <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/RIC/Publications/cops-w0858-pub.pdf>