



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

PATRICK YOES NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

328 Massachusetts Ave NE | Washington DC 20002

(202) 547-8189 | www.fop.net | legislative@fop.net

1 September 2023

The Honorable Kelly M. Armstrong
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Armstrong,

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."

For reasons that remain unknown, Mohamad Barakat loaded up his car with thousands of rounds of ammunition, three rifles, a grenade, and gas cans and propane tanks filled with explosives on 14 July of this year. Authorities in Minnesota suspect that he was planning to attack the Downtown Fargo Street Fair until he came upon the scene of a minor traffic accident and saw the responding law enforcement officers and firefighters. What we do know is that this killer parked in a lot that gave him a clear and unobstructed view of two officers—Andrew Dotas and Tyler Hawes of the Fargo Police Department—who were trying to clear the accident scene. He waited until a second pair of officers—Zachary Robinson and Jake Wallin—arrived at the scene to assist in the investigation.

Once all of the officers were outside of their vehicles, the gunman opened fire using a binary trigger, sending a barrage of bullets at the vulnerable officers. Officer Dotas was hit first and went down, followed by Officer Hayes, whose body camera was struck. Both were critically injured but survived. The young lady who was driving the vehicle involved in the crash was also hit and seriously injured, but she, too survived. Officer Wallin drew his weapon and fired a single shot before he was hit multiple times and killed on the scene. After a minutes-long firefight, Officer Robinson was able to knock down and ultimately kill the shooter.

Officer Wallin, a veteran of the Minnesota National Guard who was deployed twice as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, graduated from the police academy and was hired by the Fargo Police Department in April of this year. The 23 year-old leaves behind his parents, grandparents, brother, and fiancée.

In response to the surge of violence targeting law enforcement officers in the form of calculated and ambush-style attacks, like the kind that resulted in the death of your Officer Wallin, 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, then-Representative Kevin J. Cramer, voted for the bill on the House floor.

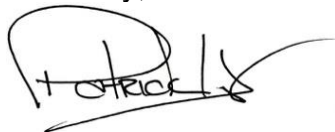
So far this year, 99 officers have been shot in ambush-style attacks and 15 officers, including your Officer Wallin, were killed. This is a stark reminder that our law enforcement officers are not just in harm's way due to the dangerous nature of their profession, but that they are also the targets of 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 Officer Wallin, who was killed by a man with absolutely no known motive, 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 373,000 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 at the end.

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>