



May 15, 2024

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Chairman  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Ranking Member  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham,

On behalf of more than one million fire and emergency service personnel and more than 800,000 law enforcement officers, our organizations are proud to endorse the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act of 2023 (S. 930/H.R. 1719) and urge you to pass the bill out of committee without amendment. Our nation's first responders routinely place themselves in imminently dangerous situations and risk their health and safety while serving their communities. When we lose a brother or sister first responder in the line of duty, we cannot allow their families to be left behind. We urge Congress to amend the Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program to ensure we support the survivors of first responders who succumb to, or suffer profound and permanent injuries from, cancer.

As you know, first responders are routinely exposed to carcinogens while performing their duties. Fire fighters, EMS personnel, and law enforcement officers are frequently exposed to toxic chemicals in structural and wildfire smoke, hazardous materials incidents, and even

narcotics investigations. While the PSOB program recognizes public safety officers who are affected by 9/11-related cancer, PSOB does not recognize “traditional” occupational cancer deaths among our members. These fallen public safety officers’ survivors are thus forced to struggle to make ends meet without their loved ones’ salaries or benefits.

Countless widows and widowers are now maxing out credit cards and incurring massive amounts of debt simply because the PSOB program has forgotten them. Congress must right this wrong and clearly state that cancer deaths are line-of-duty deaths. S. 930/H.R. 1719 is a crucial step to ensure that we stand with our fallen heroes’ survivors and recognize their service. S. 930/H.R. 1719 is a commonsense bill that fulfills the solemn promise for our nation not to forget its heroes. The strong bipartisan, bicameral support for the bill is yet another indication that it is an effective solution and urgently needed aid for so many families.

Our organizations thank this Committee for its bipartisan efforts to support our national fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel. We urge you to swiftly send this bill to the Senate Floor without amendment.

Sincerely,

Congressional Fire Services Institute  
Fraternal Order of Police  
International Association of Chiefs of Police  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
International Association of Fire Chiefs  
Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association  
National Fallen Firefighter Foundation  
National Fire Protection Association  
National Volunteer Fire Council