



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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PATRICK YOES
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

6 August 2024

The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joshua D. Hawley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Gillibrand and Hawley,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for S. 4892, the "First Responders Wellness Act," which would establish a Mental Health Demonstration Program and a national hotline to provide mental and behavioral health and substance use disorder services to law enforcement officers, their families, or household members.

The Mental Health Demonstration Program established by your bill would support the development of culturally competent and independent mental health professionals and services. The grant program will allow law enforcement agencies to partner with academic institutions, clinics, and other mental health service providers to ensure that police officers have access to these services. Law enforcement agencies, law enforcement unions or associations, and institutions of higher education will be eligible to apply for these grants, provided they meet the bill's strict confidentiality requirement.

Your legislation would also establish a national hotline that would provide mental and behavioral health and substance use disorder services for law enforcement and other public safety officers and their families. The hotline, whether by contract or grant, must be staffed by a culturally competent peer specialist or mental health provider and provide around-the-clock voice and text options as well as referral services. The bill is an effort to bridge the gap between existing regional hotlines, like New Jersey's Cop2Cop hotline or COPLINE, and the wider national need for suicide prevention services from culturally competent providers. Law enforcement officers need a simple, recognizable hotline number like the Veterans Affairs' Veterans Crisis Line. This legislation will help us do just that.

On behalf of the more than 377,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you both for your leadership on issues related to the mental health and wellness of our nation's first responders. If I can be of any help or provide additional information in support of these amendments, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: Michael Essig, President, New York State Lodge
Joseph Battaglia, National Trustee, New York State Lodge
Jay Schroeder, President, Missouri State Lodge
Kevin Ahlbrand, National Trustee, Missouri State Lodge

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