



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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**PATRICK YOES**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

23 March 2026

The Honorable S. Brett Guthrie  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank J. Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard L. Hudson, Jr.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications  
and Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doris O. Matsui  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Communications and  
Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Guthrie and Hudson and Representatives Pallone and Matsui,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to thank you for your continued leadership to advance legislation that would reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) before its statutory deadline of 22 February 2027. Our members, who serve on the front lines in communities throughout the nation, depend on FirstNet's reliable framework to perform their duties safely and effectively. To ensure the continued safety of these officers and our nation's public safety priorities, we strongly urge the Committee on Energy and Commerce to support and favorably report a clean reauthorization bill.

The foundation of FirstNet's success lies in its alignment with the practical demands of everyday public safety operations which are informed by the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC). Prior to FirstNet's creation, law enforcement officers and other emergency responders across the country operated on a patchwork of incompatible, overburdened, and easily disrupted communications systems. The tragedy of September 11, 2001, showed our entire nation the devastating human cost of those failures. In response, Congress established FirstNet as a self-funding authority in the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) within the U.S. Department of Commerce with a clear mission: build, deploy, and operate a nationwide broadband network dedicated exclusively to public safety. Following a competitive selection process, AT&T emerged as the primary provider and secured a 25-year agreement in 2017. The network guarantees preferential treatment and override capabilities in crises, facilitating smooth collaboration among responders to safeguard lives and assets. With the February 2027 expiration quickly approaching, we commend your ongoing efforts to maintain this essential system for homeland security, crisis management, and routine public safety services and urge you to consider and favorably report a clean reauthorization for consideration by the full House.

-- BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION --

FirstNet provides a specialized nationwide platform utilized by over 31,000 public safety entities which handles nearly eight million connections—a subscriber base that has doubled in just the last three years. The network has been hardened against disaster, offering capabilities such as priority and preemption that push first responders to the front of the line when commercial networks are congested or overwhelmed. Its reliability has been proven time and again in catastrophes, high-stakes events, and security operations. For instance, the December 2024 House Task Force analysis of the Butler, Pennsylvania, event emphasized that officers using FirstNet experienced no major disruptions in service, ensuring continuous high-priority links for numerous responders amid the turmoil. The Task Force’s report noted that during the incident “law enforcement personnel with FirstNet cellular service did not have notable interference with their connectivity.”

Ongoing legislative scrutiny has spotlighted FirstNet's accomplishments alongside areas ripe for enhancement. The 28 January 2026 Senate Subcommittee hearing on Telecommunications and Media, entitled "Frontline Connectivity: Assessing FirstNet's Impact on Public Safety," underscored its benefits while identifying paths for further development.

Congress’ certainly has a role in evaluating FirstNet's operations and identifying where improvements are needed and the FOP will continue to share insights from law enforcement officers whose lives depend on these critical communications systems. From our perspective, the governance model in current law provides FirstNet with a dedicated Public Safety Advisory Committee, a long-term partnership with a commercial carrier, and a reinvestment mandate that returns all network revenue to public safety improvements. We remain concerned that some provisions of the proposed amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7386, the “First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act,” may inadvertently weaken the key elements driving FirstNet’s success.

Certain provisions in the bill and the amendment could impose redundant governmental oversight, heighten procedural burdens, and escalate expenses without tangible advantages for public safety. Overall, these proposed changes to the statute could hinder FirstNet's primary objectives and introduce uncertainties that jeopardize emergency operations, community protection, and public safety. FirstNet, insulated from short-term commercial, bureaucratic, and political pressures, is highly accountable to the public safety community it serves and, in our view, is the right structure for a network that American lives depend upon. The FOP believes clean authorization is what is needed as we approach next year’s deadline.

The FOP supports robust accountability and transparency, which are key elements to ensure that FirstNet continues to provide life-saving communications to law enforcement officers and other emergency responders. FirstNet already faces rigorous scrutiny through yearly disclosures, evaluations, audits, and assessments by its Board, the Commerce Department's Inspector General, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Congress, NTIA, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Unnecessary redundancies in governance would shift focus from technological advancements and upgrades to mere regulatory adherence, yielding no direct gains for public or officer safety.

Other provisions in the draft bill seem to broaden compatibility rules in manners that might compromise specialized systems and reduce priority for responders in critical moments. These issues recall the coordination gaps noted by the 9/11 Commission, which FirstNet was built to fix. Past Board Chairs have cautioned that integrating FirstNet into larger bureaucratic structures could revive old weaknesses, marginalize frontline input, and delay vital choices. As Sheriff Michael Adkinson, Jr., Acting Chair of the FirstNet Authority (FNA) board, testified at a recent Senate hearing, appropriate oversight is welcomed, but he cautioned against creating a diffusion of responsibility—what he described as a “tyranny of the commons...when it becomes everybody’s responsibility it becomes no

one's responsibility.” We agree with Sheriff Adkinson that these governance provisions could weaken accountability and urge the Committee to instead consider and pass a clean reauthorization.

The urgency of reauthorization cannot be overstated—the statutory deadline is less than eleven months away. A lapse would create profound legal and operational uncertainty for FirstNet, its commercial partner AT&T, and the thousands of public safety agencies that have built their communications strategies around the network. Agencies making procurement decisions today need confidence that FirstNet will continue without interruption.

When the Committee marks up H.R 7386 this week, the FOP advises against unnecessary, overly prescriptive, or duplicative requirements that could hinder FirstNet’s operational effectiveness. We encourage the Committees to consider a clean reauthorization that eliminates the expiration clause and strengthens the PSAC’s role to provide direct feedback to the FirstNet Board about public safety operations and the communications capabilities needed by law enforcement officers and other emergency responders. When our members are responding to an active shooter, a multi-vehicle accident needing a broad range of emergency responders, or a natural disaster impacting a large area, they need to be completely confident that their communications network will work — that when they call for backup, backup will hear them and assist. FirstNet is the most significant investment this nation has ever made in the communications infrastructure for the men and women who protect our communities. Allowing that investment to lapse or to be weakened through diluted governance authority would be a profound failure of our obligation to those officers and the public they serve.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of the views of the more than 382,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police. 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,



Patrick Yoes  
National President

cc: Scott Hildebrand, President, Kentucky State Lodge  
Shawn Helbig, National Trustee, Kentucky State Lodge  
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