



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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**PATRICK YOES**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**JIM PASCO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

21 April 2026

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

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing on behalf of members of the National Fraternal Order of Police to address what I believe was a miscommunication regarding the National FOP's engagement with your Subcommittee and the full Committee on legislation reauthorizing the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). As the voice of law enforcement officers across the nation, the National FOP's top priority on this legislation has always been, and remains, officer safety—specifically, ensuring that the men and women who rely on FirstNet every day have a network that is reliable, effective, and free from unnecessary obstacles that could place them in jeopardy.

Our members' lives literally depend on FirstNet. That is why, since last summer, my National Legislative staff has maintained regular, ongoing communication with your staff on this critical officer-safety issue, going back to last summer about the pending hearings on public safety communications—hearings at which I volunteered to be a witness. I wanted to present to the subcommittee members my personal experience in responding to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a report I authored to the Federal Communications Commission's Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks, and, more importantly, to share the perspective of our rank-and-file members—the end users whose lives depend on the effectiveness of FirstNet. For us, the reauthorization is a critical issue of officer safety.

Ultimately, I did not have the opportunity to testify, and my feedback to the subcommittee and the committee on this issue was conveyed via written testimony and letters for the record. This included a July 2025 joint statement with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAF) and follow up contacts in August and September 2025. In December 2025, we again engaged prior to the hearing on legislative improvements to public safety communications and submitted a letter opposing certain problematic provisions in H.R. 1519, the "Public Safety Communications Act." The law that established FirstNet makes clear that public safety personnel should be in charge of their network and empowered to make decisions about the operation and ongoing improvement of the network. There are real consequences to America's law enforcement officers and other first responders if FirstNet is subject to administrative or bureaucratic delays that prevent it from making timely investments in network improvements or technological innovations. It is our officers whose lives depend on these communication systems, and we must ensure that their views are communicated clearly and directly without needing to fight through an Office of Public Safety Communications within the National

Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). It is for these reasons—officer safety reasons—that we opposed the legislation.

In January 2026, we received the draft text of the “First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act” from your staff. After several telephone conversations, the National FOP sent a formal letter to the full Committee, dated one week before the Subcommittee markup. In our letter, we urged swift reauthorization of FirstNet while highlighting our concerns with provisions that could introduce unnecessary, overly prescriptive, or duplicative requirements that might hinder FirstNet’s operational effectiveness. We explicitly encouraged the Committee to pursue a clean reauthorization that eliminates the expiration clause and limits changes to those proven to strengthen the network’s safety-oriented mission.

Regrettably, the National FOP was not a party to the separate series of meetings and discussions initiated by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and other organizations a few days before the markup. I assume this was an oversight and not by design, as your staff has otherwise been very communicative on this issue. We were not included on the 9 February email thread from the IAFC thanking the Committee for those meetings, nor on the subsequent 6 and 11 March exchanges that produced “version 2” of H.R. 7386, the “First Responder Network Authority Reauthorization Act,” which replaced H.R. 1519.

On 17 March, your staff shared an amendment in the nature of a substitute reflecting some of those changes—the first time we had seen any revised language since February. When we requested the latest version of the text on 23 March, your staff promptly provided it, and that same day, we responded with a formal letter outlining our continued concerns with certain governance provisions in the legislation and renewed our call for the committee to pass a clean reauthorization bill. Those letters, along with similar submissions from the Kentucky and North Carolina State Lodges, were entered into the record prior to the full Committee markup.

Apart from your staff acknowledging receipt of our letter, and those from the Kentucky and North Carolina State Lodges, we received no substantive feedback on our position. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, the letter from the North Carolina State FOP Lodge went completely unacknowledged by you. I found this disappointing, particularly in light of your remarks at the hearing that the FOP did not “come to the table” to discuss the bill when we had been very much engaged with you and your staff for months.

As expressed repeatedly in our communications with you and your staff, officer safety is not well served by adding additional layers of bureaucracy to an already effective network. FirstNet was created to give first responders the dedicated, reliable broadband they need in the most dangerous moments of their service. Existing oversight mechanisms are more than sufficient to ensure accountability while preserving the agility and responsiveness that officers require. Additional prescriptive requirements risk slowing decision-making, creating operational friction, and ultimately undermining the very safety protections our members depend upon when they respond to active shooters, natural disasters, or routine calls for service.

On behalf of the 382,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to be crystal clear: we want to be fully and consistently included in every future negotiation and conversation about this legislation. Our members are the ones whose lives are on the line. Their safety must remain the central focus of any reauthorization effort.

We deeply appreciate your leadership on public safety communications and your commitment to advancing this reauthorization. However, the record should accurately reflect the National FOP’s

sustained and good-faith engagement. We respectfully ask that you retract the statement that the National FOP “rebuffed” your outreach, as that characterization does not align with the extensive record of our communications.

This is one of our top legislative priorities, and we stand ready to work constructively with you and your staff to achieve our shared goal of officer safety through a strong, unencumbered FirstNet. If Executive Director Jim Pasco or I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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

Patrick Yoes  
National President

cc: Chet Effler, President, North Carolina State Lodge  
Dennis McCrary, National Trustee, North Carolina State Lodge

