



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

18 April 2019

The Honorable Chuck E. Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Senators Grassley and Gillibrand,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for S. 1208, the “Protecting America’s First Responders Act.” This legislation, which, thanks to your outreach, reflects substantial input from the FOP and the wider public safety community, will significantly improve the Public Safety Officers’ Benefit (PSOB) program for officers severely injured in the line of duty.

The PSOB program is currently burdened with unreasonable definitions of the terms “catastrophic injury” and “gainful work” that prevent officers who are disabled in the line of duty from receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. This, combined with the absence of any guidelines for the adjudication of disability claims, has resulted in the denial of PSOB benefits to officers whose service-connected injuries would be viewed as eligible by almost every other component of the Federal government. Your legislation addresses this issue by updating the PSOB disability determinations and the definitions of “gainful work,” making it more consistent with existing Federal law. We believe the changes proposed in your bill will greatly improve the ability of our injured and disabled officers to have their claims processed more fairly and more quickly.

In addition, the legislation requires the benefit award amount to be based on the date of the determination rather than the date of the injury to account for increases in the cost of living that may occur during lengthy adjudication periods. The bill also makes education assistance for eligible survivors who pay out-of-pocket education expenses while awaiting the adjudication of a claim retroactive.

Too often, and especially in cases involving a disabling injury, heart attack or stroke, the PSOB process can take several years—which is too long and too frustrating for these officers and their families. Your legislation addresses this by expanding the program’s subpoena authority to more efficiently secure records needed to evaluate claims.

While no law, benefit or government program can alleviate the grief of losing a loved one or heal a permanent injury that the officer must live with for the rest of his days, this legislation can reduce the financial pressures these families may encounter.

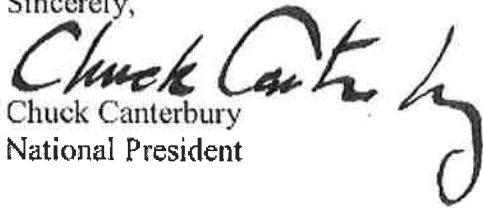
—BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION—



Given that both of you are such strong and effective champions of the PSOB program and the officers and families which it serves, I also seek your support for a FOP initiative to transfer the PSOB office from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. We are currently discussing this possibility directly with the Trump Administration and support from you both on this matter would be invaluable.

On behalf of the more than 348,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank you both for your constant support for law enforcement officers and their families as well as your ongoing commitment to continue to improve the PSOB program. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Executive Director, Jim Pasco, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Canterbury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "C" at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the name.

Chuck Canterbury
National President