



July 14, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth,

On behalf of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), I am writing to express our support for the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022.

The Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program has a long history of providing extremely important financial support to the families of police officers and other public safety officers who die in the line of duty or who have been permanently disabled as a result of physical injury, including physical ailments that result from the stress of the job. Expanding this program to designate work-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and acute stress disorder related suicides or suicide attempts as line of duty injuries provides critical support to public safety officers and their families.

The IACP also agrees with the intent of the legislation to ensure that the program is only available to those who are eligible. As made clear by the bill’s sponsors, a presumption of a line of duty death is not an absolute, and that that the U.S. Department of Justice should review, and take into account, the potential contributing factors to the police officer’s or firefighters’ death or injury and consult the agency investigating the cause and manner of death and the agency of the police officer or firefighter.

While this bill will not prevent suicide and trauma endured by public safety officials, it does address a gap in available support for officers and their families. However, more needs to be done in the way of prevention, including the passage of S. 4007, the Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act.

It is also essential that we provide the necessary resources and support to ensure the collection of relevant information related to the frequency and underlying causes of public safety officer suicides through the FBI’s Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection effort. This data is crucial in our continuing efforts to accurately understand and hopefully better prevent suicides. In addition, this data will ensure that the classification of suicides as line of duty deaths does not, inadvertently, incentivize public safety officer suicides.

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Vail, CO, Police Department

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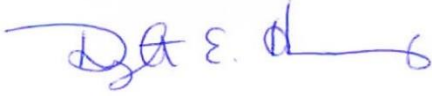
Vincent Talucci, CAE
Alexandria, VA

Deputy Executive Director / Chief Operating Officer

Terrence M. Cunningham
Alexandria, VA

I would like to thank you for your continuing commitment to enhancing public safety. The IACP stands ready to assist you as we continue to work together on issues important to policing and our communities

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Henninger". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the left and a loop at the end.

Dwight Henninger
President, IACP