



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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Executive Director

June 19, 2012

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Fitzpatrick
1224 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Leahy and Congressman Fitzpatrick:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), representing 241,000 rank-and-file police officers from across the United States, I would like to thank you for your introduction of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act. NAPO commends you for your strong and supportive position on this important program.

This legislation improves the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program to expedite the process of claims for benefits and to ensure that the eligible beneficiaries of public safety officers do not experience unnecessary delays in obtaining what is due to them.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Act was designed to offer peace of mind to the men and women of the public safety community and to make a strong statement about the value that Americans place on the contributions of those who serve their communities in potentially dangerous circumstances. Public safety officers who have become disabled or who have lost their lives in the line of duty have families who must rely on the benefits promised to them by PSOB.

NAPO supports the PSOB Improvements Act because it protects these important benefits, expedites claims and helps the program with educational and outreach programs within the first responder community.

There is one issue of special note. In 2010, the Attorney General announced new mandatory wear requirements for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership program. An officer's compliance with body wear policies is subject to too many unforeseeable circumstances to justify making the payment of death benefits contingent on compliance with a blanket policy. Consequently, NAPO advocates that language within the PSOB Improvements Act should reflect the potential impact of a mandatory wear policy. Officers who are harmed in the line of duty should not be penalized by this policy when their PSOB benefits are considered.

NAPO respectfully urges you to consider changing the proposed language addressing a mandatory wear policy and PSOB benefits.

NAPO is appreciative of your efforts to improve the PSOB program by ensuring that it meets the needs of the families of officers who so selflessly risk their lives for the safety of our communities. We look forward to working with you to advance the PSOB program and fight for the passage of the PSOB Improvements Act. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or NAPO's Government Affairs Director, Rachel Hedge, at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director