



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

PATRICK YOES NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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23 May 2022

The Honorable Gary C. Peters, Sr.
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert J. Portman
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Peters and Senator Portman,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our very strong concerns with the language of S. 1116 as introduced and to urge the Committee to amend the measure at the mark-up next week to include Federal law enforcement officers.

As introduced, the bill would create a series of presumptions within the Federal workman's compensation program for certain diseases and cancers linked to exposure to toxic substances or environments to Federal firefighters. This is unlike similar programs like the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) and many State workman's compensation programs, which cover all public safety officers—police and fire. On 9/11 and the days after, law enforcement and firefighters stood shoulder to shoulder working to protect the public, evacuate the victims, and rescue the lost. We breathed in the same poisons and were ravaged by the same cancers. We didn't treat the two disciplines differently then and we should not do so now.

The FOP supports establishing a definitive line of duty connection between the enumerated diseases and cancers, but this line of duty connection should not be exclusive to firefighters. Law enforcement officers are also exposed to these same cancer-causing hazards.

This legislation addresses an issue with the difficulty of firefighters to successfully file a workman's compensation claim. Law enforcement officers face these same difficulties, and we believe the legislation should help all public safety officers. If the bill is enacted as introduced, it would—for the first time—enshrine in Federal law one standard for the public safety discipline of firefighting and a separate standard for law enforcement even though both disciplines face the same hazards in the line of duty over the course of their careers. We believe that there should be one single public safety standard.

Current Federal benefit programs—including the Federal workman compensation program and the death and disability benefit administered by the Public Safety Officers' Benefit program—treat all public safety officers the same because they recognize that all public safety officers face the same hazards in the line of duty. A firefighter injured

rescuing a person from a fire or an officer injured subduing a suspect would be treated the same by both programs. A firefighter shot while on scene at a burning home and a law enforcement officer exposed to toxic substances at a clandestine drug laboratory would be treated the same under these programs. This is as it should be.

The FOP agrees with the central premise of the legislation—that all Federal public safety officers should be entitled to compensation for the damage to their health from the years of service in dangerous environments and exposure to hazardous substances over the course of their career. The FOP, however, insists that these reforms be fair, equitable, and available to all public safety disciplines.

On behalf of the more than 364,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge the committee to appropriately amend the legislation to include Federal law enforcement officers as well as our brave Federal firefighters. If I can provide any additional information on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes", with a large, stylized initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick Yoes
National President