



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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First PSOB Claim Under New Law Approved *Liebengood Family Issues Statement*

Washington, DC – Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, welcomed news that the death benefit claim made by the family of U.S. Capitol Police Officer Howard C. Liebengood, who took his own life a few days after being on site during the attack on 6 January—the day an angry mob broke into the U.S. Capitol and the world witnessed the rioters violently assault law enforcement officers—was approved by the Public Safety Officers’ Benefit (PSOB) program. This is the first claim awarded under the new law, the Public Safety Officer Support Act.

“While no amount of money will bring Howie back to his family, their successful claim is an important step in acknowledging that law enforcement suicides are service-connected and should be seen for what they are—line of duty deaths,” Yoes said. “Howie’s family will always be part of our family.”

The Liebengood family issued the following statement:

We were recently notified that the Department of Justice officially determined our beloved family member U.S. Capitol Police Officer (USCP) Howie Liebengood’s passing was in the line of duty under the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) program.

The determination is significant, healing, relieving, and we are grateful for it.

We hope the changes to the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) program, which allowed Howie to receive this designation, will serve as a model for other entities that offer similar benefits and recognition. This is an important step in a longer effort to change outdated processes and attitudes. We also hope that this helps other families who have felt the pain of losing a loved one to suicide.

Anyone who knew Howie knew he was kind-hearted and fiercely loyal. We all desperately miss his one-of-a-kind smile and his warm, gentle temperament, but we take some solace in knowing that Howie officially has received this well-deserved honor.

We appreciate the opportunities we've had to meet with the Department of Justice and others before this decision. We are grateful for the assistance of many stakeholders, including the Fraternal Order of Police and Blue H.E.L.P., who've stood alongside us and advocated on behalf of families like ours. We also applaud the leadership of Congressman Trone, Congressman Reschenthaler, Senator Duckworth, Senator Cornyn, Howie's Senator Kaine and other Members of Congress on this issue.

We look forward to continuing to reduce the stigma around mental health and suicide for public safety officers -- who make sacrifices for us all.

"These mental and spiritual injuries sustained by America's brave law enforcement officers in the field are real and can be just as disabling or deadly as any physical injury," Yoes said. "A death like Howie's is just as service-connected as any other line-of-duty death and we believe the PSOB's decision to award benefits to the family is the right one."

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Founded in 1915, the Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 364,000 members. With national offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., the FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those served through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation. Please visit <https://www.fop.net> for more information.