



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

8 June 2016

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for the amendments you intend to offer as the Committee on the Judiciary considers S. 2944, the "Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Improvements Act."

You have worked for decades on improving the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program for the men and women in law enforcement and there are few, if any, Members of Congress who even approach your record on this issue. The FOP supports the legislation and we believe the bill, once enacted, will provide much needed transparency and accountability to the PSOB. The FOP did, however, raise several issues with respect to S. 2944 which your amendments would address.

One amendment you intend to offer addresses the concern that children of fallen officers may "age out" of eligibility because the claim was not settled in a timely fashion. For the past decade the PSOB program has been a headache for hundreds of families who are trapped in the backlog as their claims undergo layer after layer after layer of review. These families have sacrificed enough—the delays in processing claims is certainly not the fault of the child and eligible recipient should become ineligible simply because the PSOB failed to process the claim in a timely manner.

Many PSOB claims are stuck in the system because information related to the claim has not been provided by a third party, often the public safety agency for which the officer worked. The PSOB Office recently indicated it was seeking to establish an "abandonment policy" for certain claims missing this needed information. We agree with you that inaction on the part of an agency or other third party should not prevent the families of the fallen from receiving the benefit. Your amendment would require the PSOB Office to exercise "due diligence" and not abandon any claim until the full range of investigative tools available to the Bureau of Justice Assistance, including subpoenas, has been used in an effort to obtain any missing documentation.

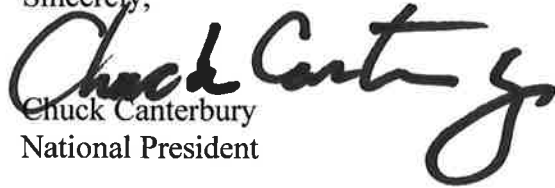
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Finally, we believe that your amendments and the changes made by the underlying bill ought to apply not only to future claims, but to all claims—especially those in the backlog which has plagued the program over the last decade. The changes made by this legislation should apply to all pending and future claims and we support any amendment or technical change which would achieve this end.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank your decades of leadership and your deep commitment to this program. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office for any additional assistance or information.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President

Mr Chairman -
this is vital legislation -
thanks so much!
Chuck