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April 22, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressional Leaders,

Every day public safety officers, including police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and others, work to maintain the safety, health, and well-being of the communities they serve. They regularly respond to stressful and potentially traumatic situations, often putting their own lives in danger.

This work not only puts public safety officers at risk for harm and serious injury but it also places them at up to 25.6 times higher risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when compared to the general public.¹ Research shows that law enforcement officers experience significant job-related stressors and exposures that may confer increased risk for mental health morbidities—such as PTSD and suicidal thoughts, ideation, intents, and behaviors—and hastened mortality.^{2,3}

Currently, public safety officers who have died or are disabled as a result of suicide, suicide attempts, or PTSD do not qualify for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB), despite the fact that they are more likely to die by suicide than all other line-of-duty deaths

¹ [First Responders: Behavioral Health Concerns, Emergency Response, and Trauma \(samhsa.gov\)](#)

² [The Impact of Mental Illness on Police Officers – Help For Our Heroes](#)

³ [Why High Rates of PTSD in Police Officers | National Police Support Fund](#)

combined.⁴ According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 4 police officers have had thoughts of suicide at least once in their lives.⁵

As attorneys general, ensuring that public safety officials have the support they need is a top priority of ours. We write today to request that Congress work expeditiously to pass S.3635, the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022, as a significant step toward ensuring public safety officers and their families are supported in the event of a death or disability resulting from the trauma inherent in their profession.

While this bill will not prevent suicide and trauma endured by public safety officials, it will address crucial gaps in available support for those who suffer from PTSD. First, it creates an avenue for officers to seek disability benefits for PTSD by directing the PSOB to designate work-related PTSD and acute stress disorder as a line-of-duty injury for eligible officers and those who are permanently disabled as a result of attempted suicide. Second, it allows families of officers who die by trauma-linked suicide to apply for death benefits by directing the PSOB to presume that suicides are a result of job duties in certain traumatic circumstances where there is evidence that PTSD or acute stress disorder would be the cause of the injury.

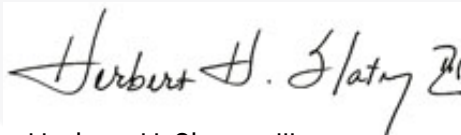
This bipartisan legislation is endorsed by the American Psychological Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National Association of Police Organizations, Sergeants Benevolent Association, National Sheriffs Association, Blue H.E.L.P, the National Border Patrol Council, and the United States Capitol Police Labor Committee.

Each of our jurisdictions is served by thousands of brave first responders who show up for us in tragic situations every day. Now we need to show up for them. These individuals deserve access to quality treatment and their loved ones deserve the benefits they have earned. We therefore strongly encourage members of Congress to support S. 3635.

Sincerely yours,



Karl A. Racine
District of Columbia Attorney General



Herbert H. Slatery III
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⁴ [Report: 228 American Police Officers Died By Suicide in 2019 - Patrol - POLICE Magazine](#)

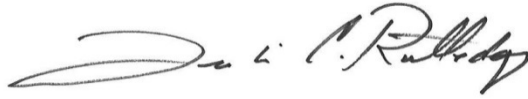
⁵ [Why High Rates of PTSD in Police Officers | National Police Support Fund](#)



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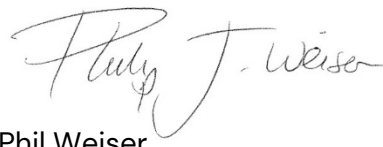
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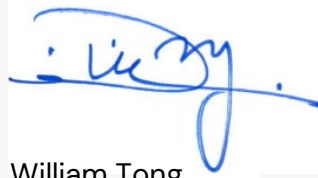
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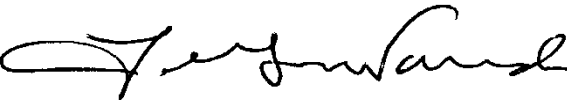
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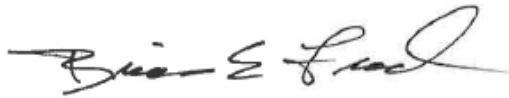
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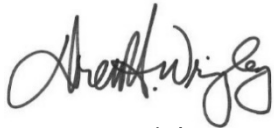
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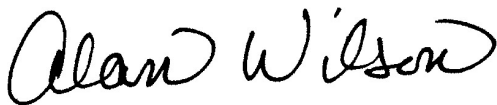
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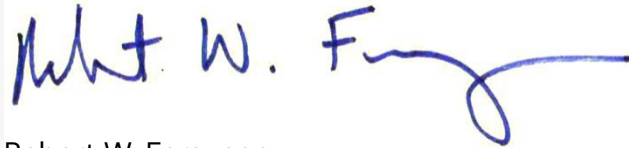
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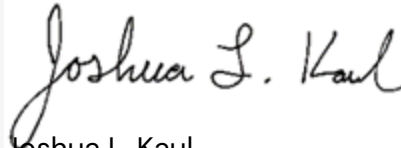
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