



The Washington Report: Update

The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations
Representing America's Finest

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NAPO Victory! Priority PSOB Legislation Passed by Senate

The Senate passed the Protecting America's First Responders Act (S. 1511) tonight by unanimous consent. This is a major victory for NAPO as we have been working on this legislation over the past three years. NAPO worked closely with Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Congressman Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) to introduce this bill, which will make it easier for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty to qualify for the federal Public Safety Officer's Benefits (PSOB) Program's disability benefits, in addition to several other important programmatic changes.

Senator Grassley and Congressman Pascrell have been very vocal about the unfair and inconsistent application of the program's "very stringent requirements" for officers disabled in the line of duty. They share our concerns that the stringent requirements for PSOB disability benefits make it extremely difficult for officers to qualify, and that the PSOB regulations regarding disability benefits do not match up with what Congress intended when it created the disability benefit in 1990.

The Protecting America's First Responders Act will ease the strict requirements for disabled officers to qualify for PSOB disability benefits, ensuring that officers who are catastrophically injured in the line of duty, but can perform some level of meaningful work, would still qualify for the much-needed benefit. Further, officers who become quadriplegic, paraplegic, or blind due to the line of duty injury will automatically qualify for the PSOB disability benefit. Disabled officers have been left behind and this bill will ensure they are not forgotten.

Additionally, the Protecting America's First Responders Act will ensure that beneficiaries receive the highest award amount possible and it will make certain that all children of public safety officers disabled or killed in the line of duty are able to benefit from the Public Safety Officers' Education Assistance Program.

The goal of this important legislation is to help protect the ability of survivors, disabled officers and their families to get the benefits they so rightly deserve and we will continue working to ensure this goal is achieved. We thank Senator Grassley and Representative Pascrell for their continued support of the law enforcement community. NAPO is now focusing our efforts on the House so that we can see this important bill sent to the President's desk to be signed into law.