



FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

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July 19th, 2022

The Honorable Gary C Peters
Chairman, Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Robert Portman
Ranking Member, Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman:

On behalf of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers (F.L.E.O.A.) Foundation, I am writing to you today requesting your support for the recent unanimous passage by the House of Representatives of the First Responder Fair RETIRE Act (H.R. 521). This act would allow federal first responders who are injured and unable to return to a law enforcement position, to take a non-law enforcement position within the federal government and maintain their 6c law enforcement retirement system. Current law takes away a permanently injured federal officer's law enforcement benefits and displaces them into a lower non-law enforcement government employee pension system.

The companion bill, S. 129, sponsored by Senator Tester, Senator Collins, Senator Gillibrand, Senator Risch and Senator King is currently assigned to your committee.

We are proud of F.L.E.O.A.'s advocacy on behalf of injured and disabled federal officers. This bill was inspired by the plight of federal law enforcement officers and firefighters who have suffered disabling injuries that would prevent them from returning to a full time law enforcement or firefighter position. This includes a Secret Service Agent who was paralyzed during a protection assignment and a Wildland Firefighter paralyzed after jumping out of an aircraft. Both desired to return to work after battling for their health and wellness, but both faced the severe economic impact of reduced pension benefits. The strains brought on by a reduction in retirement benefits can also take its toll and damage the mental wellness of officers injured in the line of duty.

As a matter of principle, this is a slap in the face for those injured while risking their lives, and we pray this will be corrected. Our Foundation is driven to support federal law enforcement officers' physical and mental well-being. According to Blue Help (bluehelp.org), more law enforcement officers have died from suicide during the last five years than from felonious gunfire and vehicular fatalities combined. Considering this alarming data, the unwarranted reduction in retirement benefits of our disabled officers can have a fatal impact on their mental wellness. Alternatively, this bill recognizes the invaluable service and sacrifice of our injured officers, and supports reinserting them in constructive government positions where they can maintain their law enforcement benefits and self-esteem.

We ask the Committee to embrace the patriotic non-partisan decision reached by the House of Representatives and pass the Senate version of the First Responder FAIR Retirement Act (S. 129) out of Committee. Your committee's support will send a resounding message that our disabled federal officers' sacrifice is appreciated and their service, benefits and wellness are not disposable.

The FLEOA Foundation (www.fleofoundation.org) is a charitable organization that provides immediate assistance to F.L.E.O.A. members who are federal law enforcement officers from 65 different agencies, including members of the Secret Service. Since 1993, the FLEOA Foundation has provided immediate support for the families of federal officers killed or critically injured in the line of duty. Additionally, the FLEOA Foundation awards annual scholastic incentive awards to FLEOA members' children who are planning to enter their first year of college. The FLEOA Foundation is also committed to supporting law enforcement suicide prevention and awareness initiatives and its mantra of 'Smash stigma, save lives.'

Respectfully yours,

Jon Adler

Jon Adler
National President