

## **Chairman Nadler, Reps. Rose & Pascrell Introduce Legislation to Compensate Public Safety Officers Who Are Disabled or Die from COVID-19**

**Washington, April 14, 2020**

Washington, D.C. –Today, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Representative Max Rose (D-NY), and Co-Chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), introduced the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act of 2020. This legislation would expand an existing federal program to ensure that public safety officers who contract COVID-19 in the line of duty are eligible for benefits should they become disabled or die from the virus.

“Whether they are law enforcement officers, firefighters, or emergency medical technicians, public safety officers selflessly put their lives on the line every day to protect our communities,” said **Chairman Nadler**. “During this time of crisis, as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, public safety officers remain on call 24-7, which puts them at serious risk for exposure. I, along with Reps. Rose and Pascrell, introduced the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act to ensure they receive the benefits they deserve, should they become disabled or perish from the virus. As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I will do everything in my power to ensure this becomes law. In the days and weeks ahead, it is imperative that we do all we can to limit exposure to COVID-19 for all essential workers who are helping our nation during this unprecedented time.”

**Nadler** continued, “While this bill is focused on public safety officers, we realize that many other Americans are working on the frontlines of this crisis – doctors, nurses, grocery store workers, and others deemed essential – and we fully support efforts to also provide benefits to these heroes through other measures. We stand ready to work with others in Congress and in the Administration to assist these essential workers who are putting their lives on the line during this crisis.”

“America’s public safety officers are out on the frontlines of this pandemic keeping America up and running as best they can,” said **Rep. Pascrell, who last week led 160 bipartisan members [demanding a presumption for first responders](#)**. “They are risking their lives to protect all of our communities from this virus. Our heroes deserve the peace of mind that their loved ones will be eligible for support by the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program. Thanks to Chairman Jerry Nadler and Rep. Max Rose, this critical legislation will make sure that if our heroes get sick from this terrible illness it will be presumed to be in the line of duty and their families will not be left out in the cold.”

**The Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act of 2020 would:**

- Establish that a diagnosis for COVID-19 will be presumed to constitute a personal injury in the line of duty for the purposes of eligibility for the Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) program, unless the officer was not on duty in the relevant time period.
- Establish the COVID-19-related disability standard be based on whether a PSOB claimant is permanently prevented from performing any gainful work as a public safety officer on account of their COVID-19 diagnosis.
- Ensure that officers who were injured or disabled in the line of duty in relation to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and whose injuries—in combination with a line of duty COVID-19 illness—rendered them disabled or caused their death will receive benefits under the PSOB program.

Currently, public safety officers or their families are eligible to receive benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefit program, administered by the Department of Justice, upon death or disability caused by injury or illness sustained in the line of duty. The Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act of 2020 would expand the program to include COVID-19 as an eligible personal injury. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, Chairman Nadler introduced and passed into law a bill to amend the PSOB to ensure those killed and injured on 9/11 were immediately eligible for the program