



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
United States Department of Justice
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

RE: The Current State of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to advise you of our significant concerns with the current state of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program. The PSOB Program was designed to offer peace of mind to men and women seeking careers in public safety and to make a strong statement about the value that American society places on the contributions of those who serve their communities in potentially dangerous circumstances. The current state of the Program, however, does little to instill confidence in officers that the federal government will do its part to take care of them and their families.

In September 2024, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a rather damning report on the PSOB Program: *Report to Congress, Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program: Transparency, Claims Assistance, and Program Management Improvements Needed*. It lays out much of what is wrong with the PSOB Program and illustrates an inability of the program to recognize the negative impact its incompetence has on claimants.

NAPO has been well-aware of these deficiencies in the PSOB Program for far too long. Over nearly the past 10 years, we worked with Congress to enact four laws to improve the transparency and accountability of the PSOB Program and expand eligibility for PSOB death and disability benefits: Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act of 2017, Safeguarding America's First Responders Act of 2020, Protecting America's First Responders Act of 2021, and the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022. While PSOB has worked to implement the provisions expanding eligibility for benefits, the GAO found that it failed to execute many of the transparency and accountability provisions that were included in these Acts.

PSOB claimants – both officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty and the families of officers who died in the line of duty – continually reach out to NAPO asking for help with their claims that have been dragging on for three or four years, some even up to twelve years with no understanding why PSOB is taking so long to determine their claim.

It is unacceptable that these brave men and women and their families are being treated in such an abhorrent manner.

There must be transparency and accountability in the PSOB Program to make certain that it is being implemented as Congress intended – to unequivocally honor and support officers and their families who have sacrificed so much in service to their communities.

I have enclosed examples of PSOB claimants who have been mistreated and whose cases have unfairly lingered. These are just a few examples of the many claimants we have worked with and there are thousands more experiencing the same issues. It is important to note that if a claim is denied, the officer or surviving family may appeal that denial to a DOJ Hearing Officer, or eventually to a U.S. District Court. But because the current administrators of the PSOB Program are sitting on these cases, sometimes for years, without any decision at all, the officers and families are left in in limbo, with no avenue for review, save your office.

The PSOB Program is a vital lifeline for officers and families who have just experienced a horrible tragedy. The much-needed death, disability, and education benefits provided by the Program must be safeguarded. We respectfully urge you to work with us to improve the PSOB Program and ensure that the survivors of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty and officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty are provided every available resource and benefit in a timely and transparent manner.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. If NAPO can provide any additional information or provide any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 549-0775 or bjohnson@napo.org.

Sincerely,



William J. Johnson, Esq.
Executive Director

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations and some 250,000 sworn law enforcement officers who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.