

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3071

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize public safety officer death benefits to officers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or acute stress disorder, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 2021

Mr. TRONE (for himself and Mr. RESCHENTHALER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize public safety officer death benefits to officers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or acute stress disorder, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Public Safety Officer
5 Support Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Every day, public safety officers, including
2 police officers, firefighters, emergency medical tech-
3 nicians, and others, work to maintain the safety,
4 health, and well-being of the communities they serve.

5 (2) From time to time this means being called
6 to respond to stressful and potentially traumatic sit-
7 uations, sometimes even putting their own lives in
8 danger.

9 (3) This work not only puts them at risk for ex-
10 periencing harm, serious injury, and severe trauma,
11 but also places them at up to 25.6 times higher risk
12 for developing post-traumatic stress disorder when
13 compared to those without such experiences.

14 (4) Psychological evidence indicates law en-
15 forcement officers experience significant job-related
16 stressors and exposures that may confer increased
17 risk for mental health morbidities (for example post-
18 traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thoughts and
19 behaviors), and hastened mortality.

20 (5) Public safety officers often do not have the
21 resources or support they need, leaving them at
22 higher risk for long-term mental health con-
23 sequences.

24 (6) In 2017, the Department of Justice ap-
25 proved 481 Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB)

1 claims, but not one of them for the over 240 public
2 safety officers who died by suicide that year.

3 (7) As it currently stands, officers who have
4 died or are disabled as a result of suicide or post-
5 traumatic stress disorder do not qualify for this pro-
6 gram, despite officers being more likely to die by
7 suicide than in the line of duty.

8 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER DEATH BENEFITS FOR**
9 **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND**
10 **ACUTE STRESS DISORDER.**

11 Section 1201 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe
12 Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10281) is amended by
13 adding at the end the following:

14 “(o) As determined by the Bureau—

15 “(1) post-traumatic stress disorder or acute
16 stress disorder suffered by a public safety officer,
17 and diagnosed by a licensed medical or mental
18 health professional, shall be presumed to constitute
19 a personal injury within the meaning of subsection
20 (a), sustained in the line of duty by the officer, if
21 the officer, while on duty, engages in situations in-
22 volving stressful, tensional, or traumatic law enforce-
23 ment, fire suppression, rescue, hazardous material
24 response, emergency medical services (including re-
25 sponding to opioid overdoses, or traumatic psycho-

1 logical or psychiatric distress calls), prison security,
2 disaster relief, or other emergency response activity;
3 and

4 “(2) in the case that a public safety officer de-
5 scribed in paragraph (1) dies by suicide (for pur-
6 poses of a claim under subsection (a)), or is perma-
7 nently and totally disabled as a result of post-trau-
8 matic stress disorder or acute stress disorder, in-
9 cluding as a result of attempted suicide (for pur-
10 poses of a claim under subsection (b)), such death
11 or disability shall be presumed to be a direct and
12 proximate result of such engagement,
13 unless competent psychological or medical evidence estab-
14 lishes that the post-traumatic stress disorder or acute
15 stress disorder was unrelated to the engagement or was
16 directly and proximately caused by something other than
17 the mere presence of post-traumatic stress disorder or
18 acute stress disorder risk factors. For purposes of para-
19 graph (2), a public safety officer shall be considered per-
20 manently and totally disabled as a result of post-traumatic
21 stress disorder or acute stress disorder if the officer is un-
22 able to serve as a public safety officer in the same or sub-
23 stantially similar role as the officer was serving prior to
24 suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or acute
25 stress disorder.”.

1 **SEC. 4. GAO REPORT.**

2 On the date that is one year after the date of the
3 enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the
4 United States shall submit to Congress a report on bene-
5 fits issued pursuant to subsection (o) of section 1201 of
6 the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968
7 (34 U.S.C. 10281), as added by this Act, and any rec-
8 ommendations to improve such subsection.

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