



## AFSCME SUPPORTS THE TBI/PTSD LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ACT AND THE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER SUPPORT ACT

Public safety officers are dedicated public employees who perform often dangerous jobs protecting our communities. AFSCME is proud to represent nearly 100,000 public safety personnel in over 40 states, including police, corrections, fire and EMS professionals. AFSCME continues to advocate for federal legislation to improve physical and mental health, safety protections and provide necessary resources for public safety professionals. Congress recently passed two laws providing key benefits to public safety.

### ❖ *Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Law Enforcement Training Act*

Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) introduced [H.R. 2992](#), which passed the House of Representatives on May 18, 2022 by a bipartisan vote of 400 to 21, and passed the Senate on August 1, 2022 by unanimous consent. Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) sponsored an identical companion bill in the Senate, [S. 4286](#). President Joe Biden signed the measure into law on August 16, 2022 ([Public Law No: 117-170](#)).

### Major Provisions:

- The law provides critical training for public safety officers, including correctional officers, to recognize the signs and symptoms of individuals experiencing a crisis due to a traumatic brain injury (TBI) or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In 2019 the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimated that over 223,000 people were hospitalized for traumatic brain injuries while the National Center for PTSD states there are approximately 12 million people in the U.S. living with PTSD during a given year. Utilizing training and best practices sourced from the training tools of relevant agencies and institutions will be incorporated into a Police Mental Health Collaboration Toolkit that will be implemented in at least one police department.
- The law also calls for the CDC to study traumatic brain injuries in first responders and requires the CDC and Director of the National Institute of Health in consultation with the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs to report to both the House and Senate on the prevalence of TBIs and concussions among first responders.
- This bill is intended to apply to both police officers and corrections officers.

### By the Numbers:

- This law authorizes the Department of Justice (DOJ) to administer \$54 million in grants annually from 2023-2027 to local law enforcement agencies and mental health agencies.
- \$40 million dollars have been appropriated for FY 2022.

**American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO**

## Public Safety Officer Support Act

Rep. David Trone (D-MD) introduced [H.R. 6943](#) which passed the House on May 18, 2022, by a bipartisan vote of 402 to 17 and the Senate passed the bill on August, 1, 2022 by unanimous consent. Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) sponsored an identical companion bill in the Senate, [S. 3635](#). President Biden signed the measure into law on August 16, 2022 ([Public Law No: 117-172](#)).

### Major Provisions:

- The Public Safety Officer Support Act expands death and educational benefits under the Public Safety Officer Benefits Program (PSOB) to law enforcement officers and their families, as well as corrections officers, who have been diagnosed with PTSD, acute stress disorder, those permanently disabled and those who have died by suicide.
- The bill recognizes the mental health challenges that public safety officers face when protecting the health, safety and well-being of the communities they serve and expands eligibility for PSOB benefits. Public Safety Officers often lack resources and support which can lead to longer term negative mental health outcomes.
- The bill recognizes that law enforcement officers are 25.6 times more likely to develop PTSD than the general population. The bill applies retroactively from January 1, 2019 to the date of enactment for officers that have died by suicide or have become disabled as a result of their occupation.
- This bill applies to both police and corrections officers.

### By the Numbers:

- In 2022, the one-time death benefit is \$390,000.
- DOJ compensated between 200 and 400 claimants annually at an average annual cost of \$100 million between 2017-2021.
- According to the CBO, on average, 225 public safety officers die by suicide each year. CBO expects that roughly one-third of suicides among public safety officers would ultimately result in benefits being paid to family members or designated beneficiaries.
- CBO estimates that about 70 claims for death benefits would be newly approved annually after the date of enactment, and about 860 claims would be approved for death benefits over the next decade.

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*AFSCME's 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.*