



Attorney General Doug Peterson

News Release

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Attorney General Peterson Joins Coalition of Attorneys General Urging Congress to Pass Safeguarding America's First Responders Act

Lincoln, NE—Attorney General Peterson is joining a bipartisan coalition of state attorneys general urging Congress to pass S.3607, the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act. The Act would permit the families of first responders, who die or are permanently and totally disabled as a result of COVID-19, to receive the same federal benefits extended to first responders, or their survivors, otherwise killed or injured in the line of duty. Current federal law only allows survivors access to certain benefits if evidence is provided, proving the deceased or permanently disabled first responder contracted COVID-19 while on duty.

In a letter sent to Congress today, Attorney General Peterson and 51 other state attorneys general urged quick passage of the SAFR Act. The letter states, in part, "When public safety officers are called to respond, they do not know whether they are coming into contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19. We have seen harrowing stories about how public safety officers have taken heroic actions to save the lives of others, knowing that they risked infection in doing so."

To read the entire letter, click [here](#).

The SAFR Act would establish a temporary presumption that officers contracted COVID-19 while on duty if diagnosed within 45 days of a first responder's last shift. The legislation ensures families of officers and first responders lost while fighting the pandemic do not face unnecessary barriers to benefits already promised under existing federal law.

This legislation is sponsored by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey. It recently passed the United States Senate and is currently being considered by the House of Representatives.

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