



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

PATRICK YOES NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

328 Massachusetts Ave NE | Washington DC 20002

(202) 547-8189 | www.fop.net | legislative@fop.net

8 February 2024

The Honorable Mary Gay Scanlon
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Scanlon,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to ask you, as a Member who lost an officer to violence in the line of duty, to cosponsor H.R. 743, the "Protect and Serve Act."

Philadelphia Police Sergeant Richard C. Mendez and his partner, Officer Raul Ortiz, had just reported to their shift with the city's Airport Unit when they heard breaking glass and observed three men who appeared to be breaking into a vehicle. As they approached the scene, they immediately came under fire. Sergeant Mendez, a 23-year veteran of the department, was struck four times and killed. His partner was wounded but survived the ambush-style attack. Three men are currently standing trial for the murder of Sergeant Mendez.

Attacks like the one on Sergeant Mendez are on the rise. In 2023, 378 officers were shot in the line of duty, 46 of whom were killed. There were 115 ambush-style attacks on law enforcement officers in which 138 officers were shot and 20 of whom were killed, including Sergeant Mendez. Of the officers killed by gunfire in 2023, 44% were ambushed.

In response to the surge of violence targeting law enforcement officers in the form of calculated and ambush-style attacks, the FOP is urging the House to consider legislation that would make it a Federal crime, in certain limited circumstances, to deliberately target law enforcement officers with violence. In 2018, this same bill passed in the House on an overwhelming 382-35 vote.

So far this year, six officers have been shot in ambush-style attacks, providing a stark reminder that our law enforcement officers are not just in harm's way due to the dangerous nature of their profession, but that they are also the targets of violent individuals whose sole motivation is to injure or kill a law enforcement officer.

Ambush-style attacks and violence targeting law enforcement officers have been steadily increasing in recent years. A May 2019 report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) concluded: "While the overall number of officers who were feloniously killed was declining, the percentage of officers feloniously killed during

surprise attacks was increasing.”¹ A December 2017 study by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, which examined law enforcement officer fatalities from 2010-2016, found that 20% of ambushed officers were seated in their patrol cars and 56% of officers killed in an ambush were not on a call or engaged in any enforcement activity.²

Considering these chilling facts and the loss of Sergeant Mendez, we are asking you to cosponsor H.R. 743 to address the national problem of ambushes and unprovoked attacks on our nation’s law enforcement officers. No officer should be at risk of being targeted while simply sitting in their patrol car, standing post, or heading home at the end of a shift. When a member of the public calls for help, we answer that call. We are asking for your help now and urge you to cosponsor this bill so that we can once again send it to the House floor for a vote.

On behalf of the more than 373,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you for considering the FOP’s urgent request to cosponsor H.R. 743. If I can provide any additional information about this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes", with a large, stylized initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: Joe Regan, President, Pennsylvania State Lodge

¹ <https://info.publicintelligence.net/FBI-AmbushesUnprovokedAttacks.pdf>

² <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/RIC/Publications/cops-w0858-pub.pdf>