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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Urges Congress to Support Benefits for Public Safety Officers, Families Affected by Work-Related PTSD

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging Congress to pass the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022. The legislation addresses gaps in support for public safety officers who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder associated with the high-risk nature of their jobs.

Attorney General Moody, joined by 52 other attorneys general, sent a letter to Congress that praises the work of public safety officers, including police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, who respond to stressful and potentially traumatic situations. Compared to the general public, public safety officers are 25.6 times more likely to develop PTSD. Research shows those suffering from PTSD are at increased risk of suicide.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Not all scars suffered while serving the public are visible, and sometimes it’s the invisible scars that take the longest to heal. Law enforcement officers suffer these mental scars in service to us, so the least we can do is support them in the healing process. That is why I am supporting the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022 and encouraging Congress to also support this necessary piece of legislation.”

The legislation supports public safety officers suffering from PTSD by designating work-related PTSD as a “line-of duty” injury for eligible officers and those disabled from attempted suicide. The legislation also allows families of officers who die by trauma-linked suicide to apply for death benefits.

According to BlueHelp.org, more than 220 first responders nationwide committed suicide since 2021, including 20 first responders from Florida. Attorney General Moody has previously hosted roundtable discussions regarding mental health and the criminal justice system. The discussions focused on identifying best practices and strategies to improve how Florida’s criminal justice system serves individuals suffering from mental health issues. One of the discussions concentrated specifically on improving mental health within Florida’s law enforcement ranks. For more information on these roundtables, click here.

Attorney General Moody signed the letter to Congress, along with the attorneys general from the following states and territories: Alaska, American Samoa, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas,

Utah, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

To read the letter to Congress, click here.

If you are suffering and need help, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741.