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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Calls for Protect and Serve Act to Pass

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging Congress to provide for federal penalties against individuals who deliberately target local, state, federal or tribal law enforcement officers with violence. Attorney General Moody sent a letter to congressional leaders to take up and pass the Protect and Serve Act of 2019. The Act provides for a federal prison term of up to 10 years for anyone who knowingly assaults a law enforcement officer, causing serious bodily injury under circumstances where the crime affects interstate or foreign commerce. The call to action follows a disturbing increase in line-of-duty deaths nationwide—there are more officer deaths so far this year than all of 2019.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Legislation identical to the Protect and Serve Act of 2019 received overwhelming, bipartisan support in passing the U.S. House just a few years ago, then somehow stalled. But this Act is needed now more than ever, as law enforcement officer deaths are rising at an alarming pace. I am calling on our congressional leaders to demonstrate courage and stand up for our officers who risk their lives daily to protect American communities we all love. PASS THE ACT.”

The Act is co-sponsored by two Florida lawmakers, Congresswoman Val Demings and Congressman John Rutherford, along with 35 other members of the U.S. House. Soon after being introduced, a total of 220 Republican and 162 Democratic House members voted for the Protect and Serve Act of 2018, with only 35 members voting against it. The latest version of the Act is almost identical to the 2018 legislation. In 2019, the Act was reintroduced and referred to the House Judiciary Committee. The committee has taken no action on the legislation since February 2019.

To view the Act, click here.

To read Attorney General Moody’s letter to Congress, click here.

Earlier this week, Attorney General Moody urged Floridians to support their local law enforcement and highlighted a grave trend—line-of-duty deaths in 2020 have now outpaced all officer deaths recorded last year. For more information on this alarming trend, click here.

Attorney General Moody is working to deter the increase in law enforcement officer deaths and to support the family members of officers killed after contracting COVID-19. Attorney General Moody serves on President Donald J. Trump’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. The commission is working to identify strategies and innovative solutions to help reduce crime, support officers, improve policing and protect Americans.

Attorney General Moody also led a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general in support of the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act. The SAFR Act permits 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 those public servants otherwise killed or injured in the line of duty.

Since taking office, Attorney General Moody has explored additional ways to promote positive impacts of law enforcement officers on local communities. Soon after becoming Attorney General, Moody launched a statewide Back the Blue campaign. The campaign highlights law enforcement officers, citizens and organizations taking extraordinary steps to forge positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Attorney General Moody also partnered with law enforcement agencies to encourage the growth of Big Brothers Big Sisters' mentorship program, Bigs in Blue. This program connects at-risk youth with law enforcement mentors. Six months after Attorney General Moody's partnership, more than 115 new mentorship relationships were formed and four new Bigs in Blue programs were created in Florida.