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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

SAFR Act Heads to President Trump for Signature

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—The Safeguarding America's First Responders Act today passed the U.S. House of Representatives following calls for action by Attorney General Ashley Moody leading a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general. In May, Attorney General Moody rallied a group of attorneys general in support of the SAFR Act to urge Congress to pass the important change to allow families of law enforcement officers who contract COVID-19, and die as a result, to receive benefits. 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.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Sadly, Florida has already lost law enforcement officers to this deadly virus and no government action will ever replace these heroes, but with the SAFR Act we can at least offer assistance and a bit of comfort to the families of the brave law enforcement officers who risk their health and safety to protect ours. I am grateful to the U.S. lawmakers who supported this important bill and look forward to seeing President Trump sign it into law."

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. The SAFR Act would establish a temporary presumption that an officer 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.

The U.S. Senate passed the SAFR Act in May. With the U.S. House passage of the SAFR Act today, the legislation now goes to President Donald J. Trump for signature.

In May, Attorney General Moody sponsored a letter sent to Congress signed by 51 other attorneys general. 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.

To view a video about the federal legislation, click here.

Washington, D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine co-sponsored Attorney General Moody's letter. The attorneys general who joined the call to action include: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona,

Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.