

But the bill before us today is a necessary and worthy bill, recognizing the honorable and selfless service that the vast majority of our police officers provide, and trying to deal with the high suicide rates that the stresses of this job that they do to protect us cause.

We should pass this bill so we can start getting a handle on this problem to preserve the lives of the vast majority of our police officers who serve us honorably and without whom we would be adrift.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, as a member of the Law Enforcement Caucus and a senior member of the Committees on the Judiciary and Homeland Security, I rise in support of S. 2746, the “Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act,” which requires the FBI to open a voluntary data collection program to track suicides and attempted suicides within local, tribal, state and federal law enforcement.

Information collected and maintained by the FBI will not include any personally identifiable information.

The legislation also directs the FBI Director to submit an annual report on the data to Congress and publish the report on the FBI website.

This program would serve as the principal data collection tool on suicides and attempted suicides within law enforcement across the country.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we do this to commemorate National Police Week, which occurred earlier this month.

Madam Speaker, this legislation reminds us of the enormous strain law enforcement personnel necessarily endure daily as they try to do their best to keep our communities safe and healthy.

By providing accurate and detailed information on these suicides and attempted suicides, more effective prevention programs could be implemented to save lives.

I urge all members to join me in voting for S. 2746, the Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2746.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

**PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER
PANDEMIC RESPONSE ACT OF 2020**

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6509) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide public safety officer death and disability benefits for certain public safety officers who contract COVID-19, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6509

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. DEATH AND DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS IMPACTED BY COVID-19.

Section 1201 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10281) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(o) For purposes of this part:

“(1) COVID-19 (or complications therefrom) shall be presumed to constitute a personal injury within the meaning of subsection (a), sustained in the line of duty by a public safety officer and directly and proximately resulting in death, in the case of a public safety officer who was diagnosed with, who received a positive test for, or for whom evidence indicated that the officer was infected with, COVID-19, unless such officer was not on duty during the 45-day period prior to being diagnosed with or having positive test for COVID-19.

“(2) The Attorney General shall accept claims, including supplemental claims, under this section from an individual who—

“(A) was serving as a public safety officer and was injured or disabled in the line of duty as a result of the terrorist attacks on the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001, or in the aftermath of such attacks developed a condition described in section 3312(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300mm-22(a)); and

“(B) was diagnosed with COVID-19 during the period described in paragraph (3), which, in combination with the injury or disability described in subparagraph (A), permanently and totally disabled or directly and proximately resulted in the death of the individual.

In assessing a claim under this paragraph, the presumption of causation described in paragraph (1) shall apply.

“(3) The presumption described in paragraph (1) and standard in subsection (p) shall apply with respect to a diagnosis of COVID-19 (or complications therefrom) beginning on January 20, 2020, and ending on January 20, 2022.

“(4) The term ‘COVID-19’ means a disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

“(p) In determining whether the personal injury under subsection (b) resulting from COVID-19 (or complications therefrom) was a catastrophic injury, the Attorney General’s inquiry shall apply the presumption in subsection (o) and be limited to whether the individual is permanently prevented from performing any gainful work as a public safety officer.”

SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” or this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6509, the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act. I introduced this bill on April 14 in response to the escalating and deadly threat of the COVID-19 virus to our public safety officers, and I am pleased that the House is considering it today.

H.R. 6509 expands the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits program, known as the PSOB program, to ensure that public safety officers who contract COVID-19 in the line of duty are eligible for benefits under the program should they become disabled or should they die from the virus.

Madam Speaker, this bill would accomplish three critical objectives.

First, it establishes that a diagnosis, a positive test, or evidence of COVID-19 infection shall be presumed to constitute a personal injury in the line of duty for the purposes of eligibility for the PSOB program, unless the officer was not on duty in the relevant time period.

Second, it ensures that officers who were injured or disabled in the line of duty in relation to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and whose injuries in combination with a COVID-19 illness rendered them disabled or caused their death will receive benefits under the PSOB program.

□ 2030

And, third, it establishes that the COVID-19-related disability standard is based on whether a PSOB claimant is permanently prevented from performing any gainful work as a public safety officer on account of a COVID-19 diagnosis.

Because of the demands placed on public safety officers during this crisis, it is important that Congress enact all of these elements.

In seeking to protect and serve their communities in their various roles, public safety officers willingly undertake risks of harm on a daily basis. Because of this, we have established the PSOB program to provide disability and death benefits for them when they are disabled or die due to line-of-duty injuries.

During the current crisis of COVID-19 contagion, the risks to public safety officers go well beyond the dangers first responders ordinarily experience. Police officers, firefighters, and EMTs are often the first responders that those with COVID-19 encounter.

Current estimates are that nearly 40 percent of COVID-19 carriers are

asymptomatic. Therefore, for first responders, even ordinary encounters with members of the community become potentially life-threatening events.

On top of this, a lack of availability of appropriate personal protective equipment has unnecessarily exposed thousands of officers to COVID-19. Despite the additional risks they take on, public safety officers continue to faithfully execute their jobs and protect us all.

H.R. 6509 acknowledges this by clarifying and expanding certain aspects of how the existing PSOB program for officers who contract COVID-19 is applied.

If an officer was on duty during this crisis and contracts this disease, his or her illness should be considered a line-of-duty injury. And officers who are disabled due to COVID-19 should be eligible for disability benefits under a less stringent standard, given the added risks they undertook during this crisis, particularly because many officers have not been given appropriate equipment to mitigate their risk.

We must also address another unique and tragic circumstance. I have long been a champion of the public safety officers who provided their service in responding to the deadly 9/11 attacks on our country. In fact, this bill is modeled on legislation that Congress enacted just days after 9/11, which I authored, to ensure that public safety officers who were injured or killed in the line of duty because of 9/11 received the benefits they deserved.

Many first responders lost their lives that day; and in the days and weeks following the attacks, thousands of public safety officers rushed in to help the injured and to seek the remains of those who perished.

Numerous studies have sadly shown that, as a result of these attacks, these public safety officers were exposed to a slew of toxic chemicals and dust that directly inhibit lung capacity. Therefore, 9/11 public safety officers are uniquely vulnerable to COVID-19, which attacks a person's ability to breathe effectively.

H.R. 6509 acknowledges that the service of public safety officers during and after 9/11 continues to put them at a higher risk of disability or death. This bill allows those officers who were injured or disabled in the line of duty in relation to 9/11 and whose injuries, in combination with COVID-19 illness, rendered them disabled or caused their death to apply for benefits under the PSOB program.

To date, Congress has upheld its promise to 9/11 first responders who, on account of their injuries on 9/11, have been tragically succumbing to cancers and other diseases. Today, we will do so again.

I note that the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department wrote to me yesterday expressing strong support for this bill and citing the importance of including

provisions addressing the 9/11 issue in this legislation.

We have also received letters of support for this bill from the Fraternal Order of Police and the National Association of Police Organizations.

I include all of these letters in the RECORD.

SERGEANTS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK

New York, NY, May 26, 2020.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,

*Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing on behalf of the more 13,000 members of the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 6509, the "Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act." This important legislation will establish a much needed presumption to enable the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program to process death and disability benefits for our frontline law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMTs exposed to COVID-19.

Nearly nineteen years ago, thousands of first responders in New York and across the country were exposed to a deadly cocktail of toxins at the sites of the worst terrorist attack in American history. To date, exposure to those toxins has claimed the lives of more police officers than died on 9/11 itself. While today we fully recognize the toll suffered by the rescue and recovery personnel in the months after 9/11, that was not always the case. And it required nearly all of the past nineteen years to fully secure health and compensation benefits for impacted first responders. The lessons of the 9/11 health crisis are the historical context for which you, the SBA, and others are seeking to address both the actual short-term and potential long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on public safety officers. We are unfortunately experiencing the short-term impact of this disease on the ranks of law enforcement, which has already claimed the lives of more than 100 officers, including six from the NYPD. But we do not yet know the long-term effects COVID-19 will present to those exposed to it.

While the PSOB Program currently covers deaths and disabilities from "infectious disease," providing evidence that a disease was contracted in the line of duty is not always straightforward. In this current pandemic, making the connection between an officer's death or disability from COVID-19 and one specific exposure to a carrier of the disease is likely impossible. H.R. 6509 addresses this issue by establishing a full presumptive standard for COVID-19-related death and disability claims for PSOB benefits. It will also create a similar presumptive standard for those officers who are suffering from 9/11 health conditions and are at significantly higher risk from this disease. In so doing, the "Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act" affords Congress the opportunity to be proactive in its response to the threat COVID-19 poses to the public safety community and ensures that our nation's heroes are not subjected to another lengthy battle to obtain the benefits they are entitled to.

On behalf of the membership of the SBA, thank you for your leadership on this legislation and your legacy of supporting positive enhancements to the PSOB Program. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

ED MULLINS,
President.

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE,
Washington, DC, May 27, 2020.

Hon. NANCY P. PELOSI,
*Speaker of the House,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

Hon. KEVIN O. McCARTHY,
*Minority Leader,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER AND REPRESENTATIVE McCARTHY: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 6509, the "Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act," and to urge the House to pass it.

We knew at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that law enforcement officers on the front lines combating this pandemic would be increasingly vulnerable to contracting the virus. As we had feared, the virus has claimed the lives of many, and now includes a growing number of law enforcement officers. As of today, 112 law enforcement officers have died from COVID-19 related illnesses.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program provides that the surviving family members of a public safety officer who contracts an infectious disease in the line of duty and dies as a result of its contraction are eligible for the PSOB's death benefit. With the help of the President and the Attorney General, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) announced on 9 April that a death benefit claim for a COVID-19 related death will be found by the BJA to have contracted the disease in the line of duty in most cases. This was a vitally important issue for our members on the front lines during this pandemic and this legislation would expand and codify this presumption.

In addition to the presumption for death benefit claims, H.R. 6509 would ensure that public safety officers who contract COVID-19 in the line of duty are eligible for benefits should they become disabled from the novel coronavirus. It would establish new standards for disability claims related to COVID-19 by defining "catastrophic injury" in cases where the injured officer was "permanently prevented from performing any gainful work as a public safety officer." At a time of heightened risk from this pandemic, we believe this is necessary to ensure that these officers and their families, who are not able to "stay at home" during this crisis, will be taken care of in the event they are disabled and unable to continue to serve as law enforcement officers.

The legislation also recognizes the unique vulnerability of officers who were injured or disabled in the line of duty in relation to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and whose injuries—in combination with a line-of-duty COVID-19 illness—rendered them disabled or caused their death will be eligible to receive the death or disability benefits under the PSOB program.

On behalf of the more than 351,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge the House to pass this measure and send it to the Senate. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

PATRICK YOES,
National President.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.,
Alexandria, VA, May 26, 2020.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
*Chair, Committee on the Judiciary,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER: On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), representing over 241,000 law enforcement officers across the United States,

I am writing to you to express our strong support for the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act of 2020 (H.R. 6509).

The PSOB Program was designed to offer peace of mind to men and women seeking careers in public safety and to make a strong statement about the value that American Society places on the contributions of those who serve their communities in potentially dangerous circumstances, such as the current coronavirus pandemic. Officers have been protecting our communities with insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE), putting themselves at high risk of exposure to this very communicable disease.

While the PSOB Program does cover line of duty deaths and disabilities due to infectious diseases, we feel strongly that COVID-19 is unique and presents its own challenges in proving line of duty exposure. While with most other infectious diseases, it is easy to pinpoint the source and details surrounding the exposure, but this situation is more difficult with the new coronavirus and its asymptomatic spread. Every day, we are learning more about COVID-19. First, it was believed it could only be spread by close human contact. Now, experts know that it can also be spread through the air. Individuals can be carriers of COVID-19 without being symptomatic. Our officers have found themselves in an extraordinary and dangerous situation over which they have very little control.

The Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act would establish that COVID-19 shall be presumed to have been contracted as a result of the officer's service for the purposes of PSOB death and disability benefits. It would create a specific standard for COVID-19-related disability this is based on whether a PSOB claimant is permanently prevented from performing any gainful work as a public safety officer due to their COVID-19 diagnosis. Finally, it would recognize the physical toll 9/11 related illnesses have had on first responders by covering under the PSOB Program those public safety officers whose 9/11 related illness are compounded by a COVID-19 diagnosis and lead to their death or disability.

For these reasons, NAPO wholeheartedly supports the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act and we call on the House of Representatives to pass this important legislation. If we can provide any additional information or assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON,
Executive Director.

Mr. NADLER. I also want to note that, as we work to support our first responders today, we must also support other essential workers who are on the front lines of this pandemic, like those in the food and healthcare industries who are putting their lives at risk each day during this crisis.

We should ensure that all those who are making the ultimate sacrifice for their communities, for us, are properly compensated. That work begins today with supporting our public safety officers with this bill.

I thank my colleagues, Representative MAX ROSE from New York and Representative BILL PASCRELL from New Jersey, for their support of this measure from its inception. And I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in supporting this bill so that we can pass it today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, America's law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders are on the front lines of the fight against the coronavirus. Over 100 public safety officers tragically lost their lives due to COVID-19, and that number will inevitably continue to rise.

During this challenging time, it is critical that we ensure our officers and their loved ones can utilize the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officers' Benefits program.

The PSOB program was created to aid officers killed or totally disabled on the job. The program reviews over 1,000 claims submitted every year and provides one-time payments of roughly \$365,000 for officers who lost their lives or who were totally disabled in the line of duty. The program also provides monthly education benefits to the children of these officers.

While nothing can ever replace a loved one, this program gives our first responders peace of mind, knowing that their families will be taken care of should the worst happen.

However, to receive benefits under current law, first responders must prove they contracted COVID-19 while on duty. Both Republicans and Democrats agree: Congress must amend the PSOB program to create a presumption allowing officers and their families to receive assistance without facing this burdensome requirement.

Unfortunately, the majority in the House is delaying these important benefits. The Senate passed S. 3607, the bipartisan Safeguarding America's First Responders Act of 2020, and they did this about 2 weeks ago.

If House Democrats were actually serious about getting these benefits to public safety officers, we would pass the Senate bill today and send it to the President to sign into law. Instead, House Democrats are again engaging in political games, rejecting the Senate's bill and taking up the House's bill, which includes several problematic provisions that the Senate will simply not agree to.

I am very disappointed that the Democrat majority would rather play partisan politics than provide immediate assistance to brave, selfless men and women who are protecting our communities. However, I agree with the primary intent of this legislation, and I strongly support our Nation's dedication to public safety officers.

A few days ago, we honored those who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country in the armed services. It is only right that we take care of first responders, who are also making sacrifices every day for this great country.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROSE), another sponsor of the bill.

PASCRELL), one of the authors of this legislation.

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I rise for our first responders who are risking their lives and the lives of their families. They go to work every day to fight this virus. They need our help.

I am proud to join Chairman NADLER, Congressman MAX ROSE, and others in support of the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act. Our bill will guarantee first responders receive Public Safety Officer Benefits if the worst comes to pass, because there have been many delays. We need clarity so that there is no anxiety about this.

In my district, the Ninth District of New Jersey, we tragically lost two first responders to COVID-19 in the line of duty.

Israel Tolentino, a firefighter from Passaic, New Jersey, was 33 years old. It was Israel's lifelong dream to be a firefighter. He made the ultimate sacrifice for our community fighting this pandemic. He leaves behind his wife and two young children.

And we have lost Frank Scopo, a police officer from my hometown of Paterson. I knew the family. He was only 34. He was a beloved member of the force. He leaves behind his wife and two sons, ages 4 and 6 months.

Another person I want to recognize, who understands and is sensitive to this, for all the years he served here, is PETER KING of New York. He never, never missed an opportunity to stand up for law enforcement and their families.

These men are heroes, Scopo and Tolentino. My heart and your heart bleeds for our fallen first responders. This bill ensures their families have some peace of mind that their benefits will be implemented.

This legislation was part, as you know, of the landmark HEROES Act, which was passed a week and a half ago. We are passing it again to underscore its critical importance.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all first responders across New Jersey and around the country. We cannot make it to the other side of this mess without them. I thank them for their service, and God bless all of them.

Thank you to law enforcement and fire service organizations who helped draft this legislation. I know they stand strong for their membership.

I want to recognize Senator CORY BOOKER and Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY for working to protect our first responders. I know they are serious about creating this presumption.

I have served as the co-chair of law enforcement in the Congress for over 16 years. These are our men, these are our women in uniform. We must get this done. We cannot delay.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, we have no further speakers at this time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ROSE), another sponsor of the bill.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for his leadership and thank him for working with me on this effort. I also thank Congressman PASCRELL for his extraordinary leadership in this regard.

I stand in strong support of our bill, the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act, because when this pandemic came to the United States, one thing that was never, ever in doubt was that our first responders would put on their uniforms and they would risk their lives to keep us safe.

It was never in doubt because whenever there has been a crisis, whether it came to my city or to our country, they have always rushed to be our first line of defense. On 9/11, they rushed into the towers. During Hurricane Sandy, they braved a superstorm. And now, during the pandemic, they are on the front lines against an invisible enemy that has claimed more than 100,000 lives nationwide.

Think of the toll this pandemic has taken on our Nation's heroes. Think of all those who have gone months without seeing their kids, their spouses, their own parents. Think of those who have gotten sick. Think of those who have lost their lives.

The very least that Congress can do right now is give our police officers, our EMTs, our corrections officers, our firefighters, our public safety officers the peace of mind that, if the worst shall happen, we will be there for them and their families.

□ 2045

When this bill becomes law—and it will become law—the family of an officer who was catastrophically injured or lost their life will not have to jump through hoops or prove that it was because of the coronavirus. They won't have to spend 10 years litigating, trying to convince the government that their sacrifice actually meant something.

Today, we are not cutting red tape; we are stopping the red tape from happening in the first place. This effort has bipartisan support. And, nonetheless—and only in Washington, D.C., is this possible—it has yet to cross the finish line. Our officers cannot afford to wait, cannot afford to wait for politics. We can't use our cops and our firefighters as political pawns.

My city has lost nearly a dozen FDNY heroes, over 40 NYPD officers, and so many more of our brave officers across the United States of America.

Every Member of Congress loves to take pictures with our first responders. We love to thank them. We love to rely on them. They protect our families when we go to Washington, D.C. Well, today is the day we see who is willing to do more than offer them pretty words on Facebook. Who is willing to do more than take a selfie?

Today, we see who is willing to help our first responders, like they wouldn't hesitate to be there for us. God bless for you and God bless the United States of

America. Let's be there for our first responders.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer strong support for the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act and to just take a little journey down memory lane.

Just 2 days ago we honored the fallen that have sacrificed their lives for this Nation for our freedom. We could not help many of us who held Memorial Day ceremonies for the fallen and to acknowledge their families who at that time, as well, acknowledge the nearing 100,000 mark of those who died from COVID-19.

As a Member of the United States Congress here during 9/11, right here in this Capitol, watching the billowing smoke from the Pentagon, hearing about the Trade Center, and of course, about the plane that no one could find that wound up in Pennsylvania, in all of those instances, first responders rushed to the scene. They were on the front lines.

I remember that; heroic actions. But at the same time, I remember, as a Member of the Homeland Security Committee, the long and arduous journey, the suffering that these individuals had to go through to receive ultimate compensation, even just a few months ago, or about a year ago, reminded of the first responders that were in the Judiciary Committee pleading again for compensation through the 9/11 bill.

I believe that where we are today is the right direction to get in front of and to help those who are still on the front lines, firefighters and techs, law enforcement officers in a variety of service, they are still there, many of whom started with COVID-19 without the right PPEs, as many of them will tell you. Some who have already lost their lives. Many that continue to suffer with the remnants or the effects of COVID-19.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the sponsors and thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. NADLER. I want to thank Mr. PASCRELL and Mr. ROSE for all of the efforts to get in front, to say that the Nation does care. Because right now, Madam Speaker, as we are on this floor, there are emergency workers rushing to someone's home to be able to take them to a medical facility to save their lives, or they may be in an emergency room right now. So COVID-19 has not ended. That is why we are wearing masks. COVID-19 has taken 100,000 lives with no end in sight.

So I rise in support to be able to provide these lifesaving front-liners the safety net that they need, and the compensation that they need, in order for us to say more than a thank you, but to acknowledge and honor them for their service.

Let us hope that we can, as a Nation, follow the instructions of social distancing, testing, wearing masks, that we can overcome this. But all the time that we are taking that journey, we will be looking to these first responders to be on the first line.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time, and I ask our colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I am disappointed that we are not taking up the bipartisan Senate-passed POS bill that had a clean fix to this issue. So I do want to say, I am disappointed that we are not running the Senate bill, which again, was bipartisan.

But I do want to say, I support our Nation's first responders, and I truly believe it is vital that they receive the benefits they have earned. So I urge my colleagues to support our Nation's public service officers.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 crisis in this country has taken many lives and impacted every community. In our national response, there are many areas in which we know we must do better and do more to address the public health emergency and the economic impact on our people.

This bill, which expands an existing program in several important ways will help address the tragic circumstances of public safety officers who are disabled by or die from this virus. It is one piece of the overall effort, but an important one.

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, ask my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of H.R. 6509 today.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6509, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2109

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro