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May 21, 2020

Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Jerrold Nadler  
Chairman  
House Judiciary Committee  
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member  
House Judiciary Committee  
2056 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Support of S. 3607, Safeguarding America’s First Responders Act of 2020**

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Nadler and Ranking Member Jordan,

As State Attorneys General, and the chief legal officers of our respective states, we encourage Congress to swiftly enact S. 3607, the Safeguarding America’s First Responders Act of 2020 (“SAFR”). Our public safety officers risk their lives every day to keep us safe but the COVID-19 pandemic has made their sacrifice clearer. As public safety officers in our states have battled the COVID-19 pandemic, they have put themselves at risk while most Americans were able to stay home.

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.<sup>1</sup> As Tampa Police Chief Brian Dugan said, “There’s no way for a police officer to do their job and not potentially be exposed to the virus.”<sup>2</sup> And sadly, in many of our states, first responders have lost their lives to COVID-19.

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<sup>1</sup> Washington Post, “Police in several cities test positive for coronavirus, stirring fears of spread among first responders”, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/police-in-several-cities-test-positive-for-coronavirus-stirring-fears-of-spread-among-first-responders/2020/03/28/b88b17f4-6f9a-11ea-a3ec-70d7479d83f0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/police-in-several-cities-test-positive-for-coronavirus-stirring-fears-of-spread-among-first-responders/2020/03/28/b88b17f4-6f9a-11ea-a3ec-70d7479d83f0_story.html) (March 28, 2020).

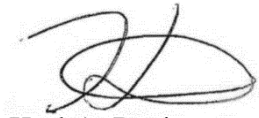
<sup>2</sup> Id.

When a public safety officer loses their life in the line of duty, there are often many benefits available to their families. Federal law currently provides for the Public Safety Officers Benefits Program, administered by the Justice Department, which provides death benefits to survivors of police officers and first responders who perish in the line of duty or as the result of a work-related event. The program requires evidence linking deaths caused by an infectious disease to work-related activity. In many cases, the origin of an infection can be easily identified, but determining where and when someone contracts COVID-19 in the midst of a global pandemic presents a unique challenge. Inevitable human contact while off duty and delayed manifestation of the disease present problems a family of a public safety officer who dies of COVID-19 should not have to overcome.

SAFR works to overcome this challenge by establishing a temporary presumption that COVID-19 infections will be considered to be contracted while on duty if diagnosed within 45 days of an officer's last shift. The legislation ensures that families of officers and first responders lost while fighting the pandemic do not face unnecessary barriers to benefits they have already been promised.

We applaud the Senate's recent passage of S. 3607, and we urge swift action by the House of Representatives to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Karl A. Racine  
District of Columbia Attorney General



Ashley Moody  
Florida Attorney General



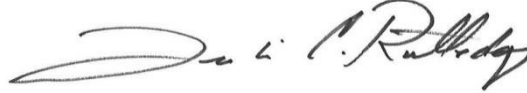
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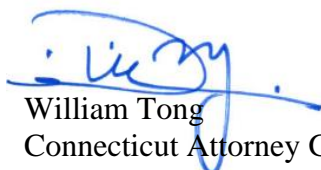
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California Attorney General



Phil Weiser  
Colorado Attorney General



William Tong  
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Kathleen Jennings  
Delaware Attorney General



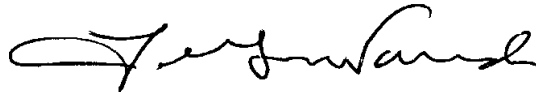
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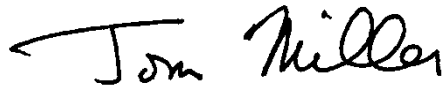
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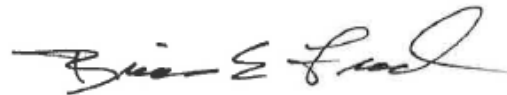
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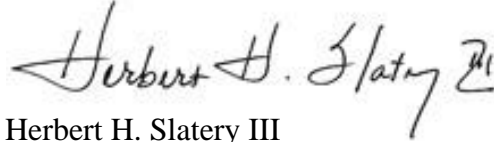
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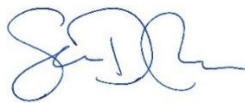
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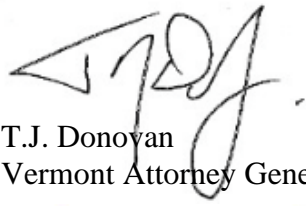
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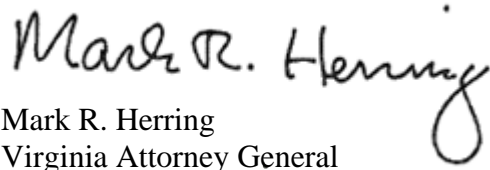
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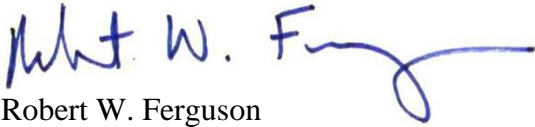
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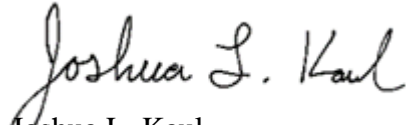
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