



Fairbanks International Airport

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April 15, 2017

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Room 411, Capital Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins:

Thank you for drafting legislation to create the North Star Medal for peace officers, firefighters, and other first responders killed or injured in the line of duty.

In my position as both a Police Chief and Fire Chief, I have been blessed to be able to work with so many of the professional and selfless men and women of the emergency responder family throughout Alaska. Sadly in recent years I have helped coordinate multiple processions as our wounded or fallen Alaskan heroes have traveled through the Fairbanks International Airport. There are no words to describe the enormity of the impact that these events have had on the responder's families, the responder's co-workers, and the community.

The community impact of these tragic events was never more evident as when I was the Marshal for Sergeant Allen Brandt's procession when he returned to Fairbanks after he gallantly gave his life protecting his community. Setting up for the procession, the Fairbanks Police Department officers and their vehicles were parked in such a way to allow privacy and respect their grieving process. Neighborhood residents wanting to show their respects began walking into the area. The pain and grief on the faces of the Fairbanks officers was obvious and the residents immediately realized that this was a hallowed time and place. I told them not to leave and directed them to huddle beside my patrol car, where they could pay their respects and respect the privacy of the grieving officers. Out of view, these wonderful members of the community grieved in silence with their officers. After the procession passed and the Fairbanks officers returned to their vehicles and fell in line, these families appeared from behind my vehicle walking towards me sobbing with their arms outstretched. Even though we were strangers, we all embraced and these beautiful people expressed their sincere thanks for all emergency responders in a way that will be etched in my memory forever.

I am writing this letter of support for the North Star Medal because the great people of the State of Alaska need the ability to bestow an award as a symbol of their deep respect for emergency responders injured or killed as they vigilantly and courageously protect the community in which they live and love. The North Star Medal is the perfect name.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sean J. Martines

Chief of Police and Fire, Fairbanks International Airport

"Keep Alaska Flying and Thriving."