

From:
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 11:11 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: House Bill 23:Survivors' Medical Benefits

Dear Representative Josephson,

I am writing to you about the lack of health insurance coverage for the survivors of our corrections officers in the event of an on duty death. I believe that these survivors deserve coverage as much as those of firefighters and police officers.

Our corrections officers get injured on the job. They are understaffed, underfunded and often times unprotected while on duty in overcrowded facilities. I'm asking that survivors of corrections officers who are killed on the job have their health insurance coverage continued at the same level it was at the time of the death.

I was trying to find an eloquent way to express myself in proving how dangerous the corrections officers job is and sadly, fate provided me with proof. Yesterday I woke up to the fact that 4 corrections officers in Delaware were being held hostage by the inmates. In the end, one officer's life was taken and the others were injured but survived.

Please reconsider this bill and include our corrections officers as part of the brotherhood of law enforcement.

Debbie Needles
Valdez, AK

From: Chris Bottoms

Saturday, February 04, 2017 12:41 PM

Subject: Correctional Officer Death Benefit

Hello,

My name is Chris Bottoms. I am a Correctional Officer at Goose Creek Correctional Center.

I am concerned about Correctional Officers not being included in HB 23. I agree that police officers should have a benefit because of the direct threat that they face every day.

Many people, however, don't consider the potential danger that correctional officers face every day. I know police officers that say that they would never want to do my job because of the potential danger. Our facilities receive the same people the police are dealing with after they have been arrested. Many times they are angry, high, drunk, detoxing, or all of the above. We do our best to handle these situations armed with nothing more than pepper spray.

There are many other potential dangers to consider as well. At our facility, we have over 1200 inmates. Our housing units have 128 beds, 1 officer, and none of the doors can be locked. I have had murderers housed in the room directly behind where my work station is located. Those factors, coupled with the seemingly unstoppable flow of drugs into our facilities, is a potential recipe for disaster.

As a transport officer, I am also responsible for the safety and security of inmates in public places. Hospitals, clinics, and private doctor's offices are among the places we go. Some of these appointments, such as dialysis, are regularly scheduled. This increases the risk exponentially.

I know that we are the forgotten of the law enforcement community, but we do our part to assure the safety of our prisoners, our staff, and our communities.

Thank You,

Chris Bottoms

From: Jason Forster
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 6:44 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: Hb23

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jason Forster. I am currently a Corrections Officer at Goose Creek Correctional Center. I started my career at Spring Creek Correctional Center in 2001. I have since then worked at Anchorage Jail, Mat-Su Pretrial, and Central Transportation. I am currently at Goose Creek Correctional Center working as the facility's Transportation Sergeant. During my tenure I have been spit on, assaulted and have had to respond to countless assaults in progress, including prisoner on Officer assaults as well as prisoner on prisoner fights. I have had urine and feces thrown on me. I have been exposed to a myriad of blood borne pathogens. The constant element of danger is very real. Beyond the simple logistics of being completely outnumbered, should the temperament of the prison population darken, there is also the potential for many different handmade weapons many of which I have personally confiscated. On numerous occurrences offsite from the facility I have responded to vehicle accidents and helped Police Officers in need on the side of the road while working as a Transportation Officer. Again the constant element of danger is real.

Working inside the confined walls of a prison is not an easy profession. We as Correctional Officers have to wear many hats day to day. We are counselors, role models and first responders in just naming a few of our many responsibilities. Just like all law enforcement professionals we took an oath of office.

I sincerely hope that you reconsider the removal of Corrections Officers from bill (HB23). The re-implementation of Corrections Officer on bill (HB23) will help give our families, ourselves, and your constituent's peace of mind as we walk through the doors to wear our multiple hats behind the walls of the prison.

I appreciate your time and consideration,

Jason Forster

Chairman Foster and Chairman Seaton

I would like to start by thanking Representative Millett for all the hard work she has put in on this issue over the last several years. I want to also thank Representative Josephson for carrying this forward.

I am writing today to support HB 23. HB 23 provides a much needed and long overdue fix that will provide health benefits to the spouses and dependent children of Police officers and Fire fighters who are killed in the line of duty. There is near universal agreement that these benefits should be provided in statute. The way the staff at retirement and benefits explained it to me is that this problem is the result of an oversight. The benefits were previously provided in Tier 1 but language dealing with actives who die in the line of duty was accidentally left out when new tiers were crafted. The state and a few municipalities have provided these benefits on a year to year basis since it was discovered that coverage did not exist in statute. This method requires families and those who advocate on their behalf to yearly revisit the pain of losing a loved one in the line of duty in order to remind elected officials of their sacrifice and the need for these benefits. It is time to fix that problem and HB 23 will do that for all municipal and state police officers and fire fighters..

I know the municipal league testified against being included in this bill. On one hand they talked about how they are providing these benefits in cities like Fairbanks and Hoonah and always will and on the other hand they said they can't be forced to pay these benefits. Those two thoughts do not make sense. Once you hire a police officer or a fire fighter you accept that responsibility. They should know that their employer is going to take care spouse and children should they make the ultimate sacrifice. Regardless of whether they work for the state or a municipality.

Thanks You

Tom Wescott

President Alaska Professional Fire Fighters

Hello,

I am writing in support of HB 23 as a wife of an Alaska State Trooper. He is our sole provider as we have chosen to have me stay at home and raise our 2 beautiful daughters. He puts his whole heart into his job every day (whether on the clock or on standby as we are in a rural area) and has done so for 19 years this month. The last few years have been extremely sad and shocking with the way the world views LEO's and how our state is set up to help these men/women that serve their great state. We have learned first hand how short the state falls when caring for the fallen's family.

These men and women risk their lives on a daily basis to help serve and protect the citizens of this state. The very least we can do is help them/their families when/if that horrible moment happens and they can no longer provide for their families. I worry daily of all the "what if's" and I feel we have set ourselves up fairly well, but there isn't anything that can help ease the burden of the healthcare situation like HB23 could.

Please consider and pass HB23 to help out the men and women that would risk it ALL to help you if you called. It's the least you could do. I would want the very best for your family as well.

Thank you for your time and service.

Amy Lantz (along with her daughters, Ashleigh and Hayleigh)

From: Jeff Wadle

Date: February 2, 2017 at 10:49:25 AM AKST

To: <representative.louise.stutes@akleg.gov>, <representative.neal.foster@akleg.gov>, <representative.paul.seaton@akleg.gov>, <representative.les.gara@akleg.gov>, <representative.david.guttenberg@akleg.gov>, <representative.jason.grenn@akleg.gov>, <representative.scott.kawasaki@akleg.gov>, <representative.daniel.ortiz@akleg.gov>, <representative.lance.pruitt@akleg.gov>, <representative.steve.thompson@akleg.gov>, <representative.tammie.wilson@akleg.gov>, <representative.cathy.tilton@akleg.gov>

Subject: HB 23

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

I am an Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologist and testifying here on my own behalf.

I support HB 23 to provide for the families of Peace Officers and Firefighters who die in the line of duty.

However, there is a missing piece in this legislation that I would ask you to address by amending the bill to add Dept of Fish and Game personnel who die in the line of duty.

Pete Winslow, Ralph Reischl, Randy Kacyon, Lester Varozza, John Frank, Arthur Bratlie, Hugh Oneil, Lee Larson, Valerie Chatbot, Ruth Southern, Edwin Strong, John Solf, Ken Friedrich, Gary Wohlfeil, Shelli Clay, Leroy Bohuslov, James Erickson, Kim Bussell, Lloyd Stebbins, Lloyd Lewis, Spencer Linderman, Doyle Cisney, Rex Thomas, Johnathan Ward, Jack Geil, Robert Lawler and Kevin Kivisto are the 27 Alaska Dept of Fish and Game staff that have lost their lives on the job. I invite you to visit their memorial plaque at ADF&G headquarters.

ADF&G has lost more staff than any other state agency, including the troopers who we work closely with, due to the extensive time spent in aircraft, on the water, and in the field.

Dangerous work in boats, in aircraft, diving, and conducting field work is a routine part of our work duties to maintain and sustain the fish and game populations in Alaska that Alaskans rely on for food and livelihoods. I have personally saved one person from drowning while collecting data, have visited a colleague in the hospital after being severely injured in a plane crash while performing aerial surveys, picked up a friend and coworker from a float plane to transport to the hospital after being mauled by a bear while walking stream surveys. There are many such instances and I could go on but I think hopefully you understand that these are just a few of the dangers we face while performing our duties as a state employee within ADF&G.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Wadle

Kodiak, AK 99615

From: Richard Morris

Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 10:30 AM

To: Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>; Rep. Les Gara <Rep.Les.Gara@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Guttenberg <Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jason Grenn <Rep.Jason.Grenn@akleg.gov>; Rep. Scott Kawasaki <Rep.Scott.Kawasaki@akleg.gov>; Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>; Rep. Lance Pruitt <Rep.Lance.Pruitt@akleg.gov>; Rep. Steve Thompson <Rep.Steve.Thompson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Tammie Wilson <Rep.Tammie.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Cathy Tilton <Rep.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>; Rep. Louise Stutes <Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>

Subject: HB 23

To my representatives,

I would like you to consider adding ADF&G to house bill 23. I respect the service that the troopers and firefighter perform, but I also respect the scientists out there risking their lives to get valuable data to manage Alaska's wild resources. More ADF&G personnel have died while on duty than the State Troopers and I feel it would be wrong to exclude them from this bill. Please add them to the amendment.

Sincerely,

Rich Morris



Making a Difference in the Last Frontier



February 1, 2017

The Honorable Andy Josephson
House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau AK, 99801
Representative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov

Dear Representative Josephson:

On behalf of the Alaska Peace Officers Association (APOA), I am writing to convey support of HB 23, "An Act relating to major medical insurance coverage under the Public Employees' Retirement System of Alaska for certain surviving spouses and dependent children of peace officers and firefighters; and providing for an effective date."

APOA strongly supports the implementation of medical insurance for the families of fallen peace officers and firefighters. To that end, we fully support HB23, which would assure families of state and municipally employed peace officers and firefighters that security.

APOA has significant membership within the ranks of municipal peace officers and firefighters, along with those who serve the State of Alaska. It is therefore essential to us that all peace officers and firefighters be assured that their families receive ongoing health care in the event of death in the line of duty. Thank you for bringing this legislation forward to provide them with that security and peace of mind.

Please contact the APOA office in Anchorage at 277-0515 if there is anything our organization can do to help with the passage of this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Johnson".

Brad Johnson
State President
Alaska Peace Officers Association

Cc: Representatives Kawasaki, Kito, LeDoux, Wool, Tuck, Grenn, Westlake

PO Box 240106
Anchorage, AK 99524

From: Kristina Rasmussen - Hoffert
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2017 8:22 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 23

Dear Mr. Seaton,

I work as a Correctional Officer II here at Fairbanks Correctional Center. I have been with the Department of Corrections now for a little over 5 years, it's a good job & I work with a great bunch of people! I am saddened by HB 23, as a CO I realize that we are the "red headed step children of law enforcement." I do however think that my life & the lives of my coworkers are just as important as the lives of any other law enforcement officer; I also think that my family deserves to be taken care of if something happens to me at work. CO's being removed from HB 23 is, of course, demeaning and disheartening. It's like a slap in the face from the State of Alaska.

Please include Correctional Officers in HB 23". The families of Correctional Officers are just as important as any other Law Enforcement families.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Kristina Hoffert

From: Ty Casteel

Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 5:15 AM

To: Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>; Rep. Les Gara <Rep.Les.Gara@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jason Grenn <Rep.Jason.Grenn@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Guttenberg <Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov>; Rep. Scott Kawasaki <Rep.Scott.Kawasaki@akleg.gov>; Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>; Rep. Lance Pruitt <Rep.Lance.Pruitt@akleg.gov>; Rep. Steve Thompson <Rep.Steve.Thompson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Tammie Wilson <Rep.Tammie.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Cathy Tilton <Rep.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>

Subject: Please include Correctional Officers in HB 23

Hello.

I am a Correctional Officer for the State of Alaska.

A Corrections Officer has been killed in Delaware in the Hostage Situation that just ended.

There is no difference in Criminals that murder a Police Officer on the street and Criminals that murder a Corrections Officer in a prison, in both cases a Law Enforcement Officer has been murdered, their family left alone.

Please include Correctional Officers in HB 23.

-Tyrone Casteel

From: dennis kempen

Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2017 5:53 PM

To: Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>; Rep. Les Gara <Rep.Les.Gara@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jason Grenn <Rep.Jason.Grenn@akleg.gov>; Rep. David Guttenberg <Rep.David.Guttenberg@akleg.gov>; Rep. Scott Kawasaki <Rep.Scott.Kawasaki@akleg.gov>; Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>; Rep. Lance Pruitt <Rep.Lance.Pruitt@akleg.gov>; Rep. Steve Thompson <Rep.Steve.Thompson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Tammie Wilson <Rep.Tammie.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Cathy Tilton <Rep.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>

Cc: info@acoa.us

Subject: Law Enforcement Survivor's Bill

Please include Correctional Officers in HB 23. Our families are just as important as any other Law Enforcement families.

This is real business as we are faced with situations almost daily which we must respond to. We only pray and hope we are not faced with the current on going hostage situation in Delaware as I write you.

More

An inmate inside Vaughn called [@delawareonline](https://www.delawareonline.com) and said those behind hostage situation stabbed cop, made demands

Dennis Kempen