



## **Cosponsor the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act**

- **Background:**

For decades studies have indicated a strong link between firefighting and increased risk for several major cancers. The heightened incidence of cancer among firefighters has been attributed to their frequent exposure to a range of harmful substances.

A recent International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) study reclassified the occupation of firefighting itself to its highest hazard category: Group 1 or “carcinogenic to humans.” In 2015, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) published a multi-year study finding that firefighters are 9% more likely to develop cancer and 14% more likely to die from cancer relative to the general population.

The Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) program provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, and disability benefits to first responders catastrophically injured in the line of duty. This program is an important way for our nation to express its appreciation for those first responders who make the ultimate sacrifice or are permanently disabled while serving their communities.

Currently, first responders are only POSB eligible for deaths or permanent injuries sustained in the line-of-duty from heart attacks, strokes, suicides, mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress, and 9/11 related illnesses.

- **Bill Summary:**

Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act would expand access to PSOB for the families of first responders, including firefighters, who pass away from cancer caused by carcinogenic exposure during their service. This bill would also extend disability benefits in cases where first responders become permanently and totally disabled due to cancer.

- **Status:**

The Senate version of this bill was reintroduced by Senators Klobuchar and Cramer on January 2023. As of January 27, the House version of this bill has not been reintroduced yet. The bill numbers in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress were S. 930/H.R. 1917.