



**Josh Kaul**  
Wisconsin Attorney General

**P.O. Box 7857**  
**Madison, WI 53707-7857**

---

**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 21, 2020

**AG Kaul Joins Bipartisan Coalition of 51 Attorneys General Urging  
Congress to Pass Safeguarding America's First Responders Act**

MADISON, Wis.— Attorney General Kaul is joining a bipartisan coalition of 51 attorneys general urging Congress to pass S.3607, the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act. Supported by Badger State Sheriffs Association, Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, and the Wisconsin Professional Police Association, the Act would permit the families of first responders, who die or are permanently and totally disabled as a result of COVID-19, to receive the same federal benefits extended to first responders, or their survivors, otherwise killed or injured in the line of duty. Current federal law would only allow survivors access to certain benefits if evidence is provided proving the deceased or permanently disabled first responder contracted COVID-19 while on duty.

“I applaud the bipartisan group of U.S. Senators and am proud to be part of a bipartisan group of AGs supporting the SAFR Act,” said Attorney General Kaul. “We must support first responders who contract COVID-19 and their families. I encourage Congress to pass this legislation promptly. I also hope that Assembly Republicans will reconsider their decision to block legislation that would have meaningfully assisted first responders in getting worker's compensation benefits if they contract COVID-19.”

Badger State Sheriffs' Association President Sheriff Mark Podoll and Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association President Chief Deputy Jeff Spencer commented, “The challenges of law enforcement have only increased with COVID-19, including the risk of death or serious injury to our law enforcement officers. It's

Page 1 of 3

imperative that we care for those men and women who might fall victim to COVID-19 and the SAFR Act is a solid step in that direction.”

Jim Palmer, executive director of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association also praised the Act, “The SAFR Act would recognize how our brave first responders serving on the front lines the unprecedented public health crisis are doing so at greater risk to themselves and their loved ones. On behalf of the more than 10,000 members that we represent, the WPPA is proud to stand with Attorney General Kaul and this impressive bipartisan coalition of law enforcement officials to support this legislation and the common-sense protections it would provide to the families of first responders that fall victim to COVID-19. We urge Congress to pass this bill as soon as possible.”

In a letter sent to Congress today, AG Kaul and 51 other state attorneys general urged quick passage of the SAFR Act. The letter states, in part, “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.”

To read the entire letter, click [here](#).

The SAFR Act would establish a temporary presumption that officers contracted COVID-19 while on duty if diagnosed within 45 days of a first responder’s last shift. The legislation ensures families of officers and first responders lost while fighting the pandemic do not face unnecessary barriers to benefits already promised under existing federal law.

This legislation is sponsored by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey. It recently passed the United States Senate and is currently being considered by the House of Representatives.

To read the Act, click [here](#).

Led by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody and Washington, D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine, Attorney General Josh Kaul joins attorneys general from Alaska, American Samoa, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode

Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.