

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

June 7, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our collective concern about the Department of Justice's (DOJ) administration of the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) program, particularly with its slow implementation of the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefit Act (PL 108-182). With the DOJ having denied 46 claims and made only six positive Hometown Heroes determinations out of the nearly 260 claims it has received, we believe it has misinterpreted the intent of Congress in enacting the law by forcing families to deal with unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles to prove their claims.

Hometown Heroes, which passed unanimously in both Houses of Congress three years ago, reflects the intention of Congress to provide a "presumptive benefit" to the families of public safety officers who die from a heart attack or stroke in the line of duty unless there is strong evidence to the contrary:

"[I]f a public safety officer dies as the direct and proximate result of a heart attack or stroke, the officer shall be presumed to have died as the direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty."

The legislation was motivated by the fact that police, firefighters, and other public safety officers put themselves at risk every day, including the risks that their stressful and strenuous activity will result in a heart attack or stroke. This is confirmed by the results of a recent Harvard study, which shows that firefighters are up to 100 times more likely than the general public to die of a heart attack or stroke. These men and women, who serve our country and their communities so valiantly, deserve no less than our full support in ensuring their families are cared for when they make the ultimate sacrifice.

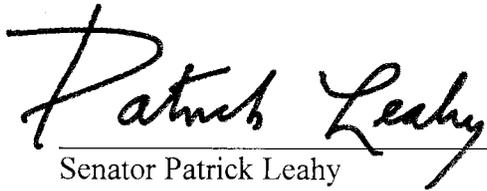
In 2004, then-Attorney General Ashcroft mandated that all PSOB claims should be processed in no more than 90 days. Unfortunately, more than three years since the passage of the Hometown Heroes law, and more than eight months since DOJ finalized

its rule on the law's implementation, over 80 percent of the claims still languish. The Department of Justice appears to be giving them less than its full support with its delays and denials. We are disappointed that this situation remains unresolved. The families of our nation's first responders have waited too long.

Therefore, we call on your administration to afford the families of public safety officers who die from heart attacks or strokes within the parameters set forth in the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefit Act their rightful benefits under the law by expediting all of outstanding claims and ensuring that benefits are awarded in line with the intention of Congress.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

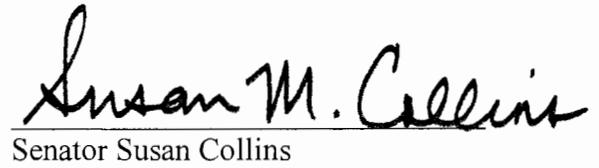
  
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Senator Patrick Leahy

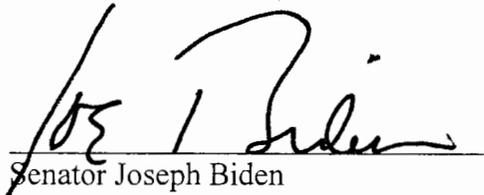
  
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Senator Arlen Specter

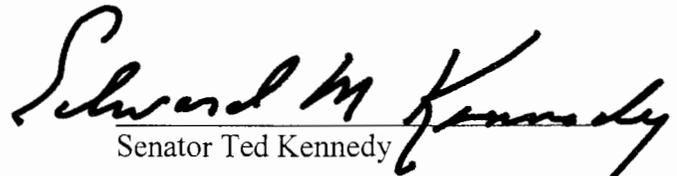
  
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Representative Bob Etheridge

  
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Representative Peter King

  
Senator Joseph Lieberman

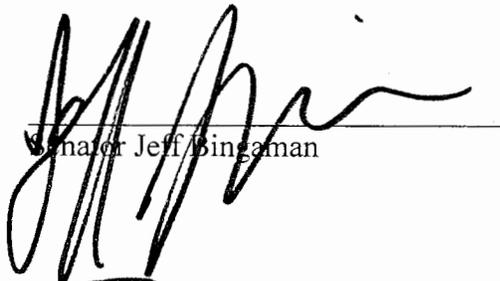
  
Senator Susan Collins

  
Senator Joseph Biden

  
Senator Ted Kennedy

  
Senator Thomas Carper

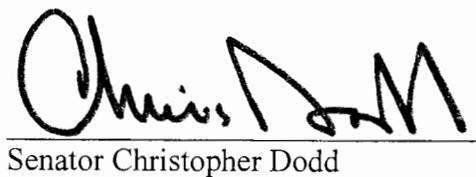
  
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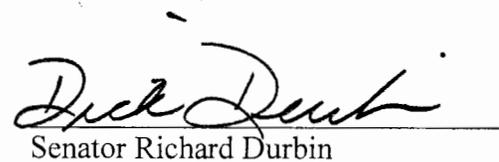
  
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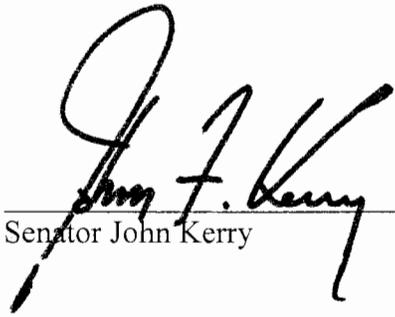
  
Senator Sherrod Brown

  
Senator Benjamin Cardin

  
Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

  
Senator Christopher Dodd

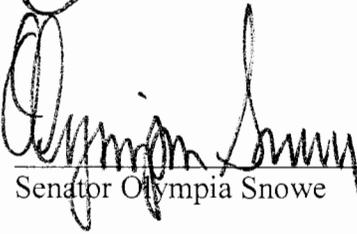
  
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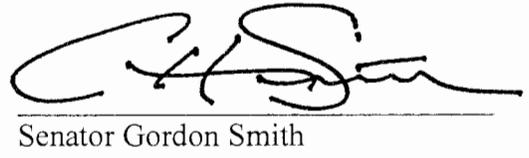
  
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Senator John Kerry

  
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Senator Patty Murray

  
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Senator Bernard Sanders

  
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Senator Olympia Snowe

  
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Senator Gordon Smith

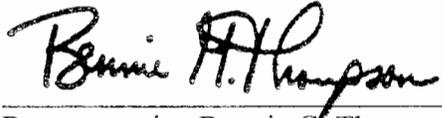
  
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Senator Barbara Boxer

  
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Senator Bill Nelson

  
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Senator Mary Landrieu

  
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Senator Thad Cochran

  
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Senator Charles Schumer



Representative Bennie G. Thompson



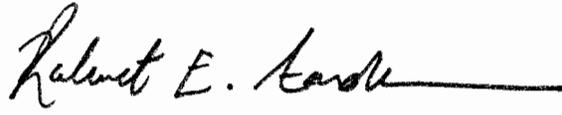
Representative Stephen H. Hoyer



Representative Jo Ann Emerson



Representative Rosa DeLauro



Representative Robert E. Andrews



Representative Patrick Kennedy



Representative Howard Coble



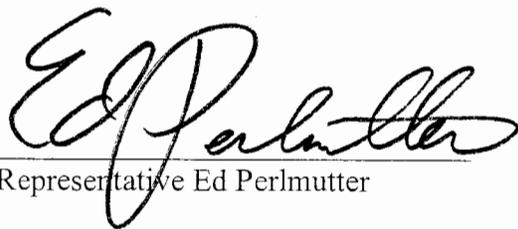
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Representative Jerrold Nadler



Representative Christopher Shays

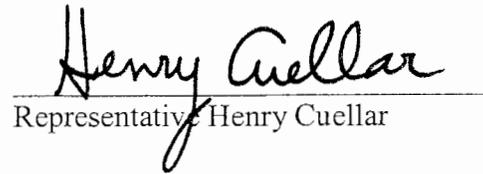


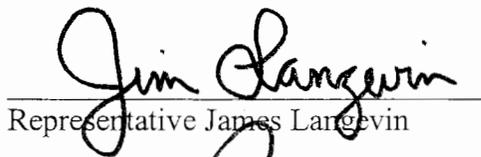
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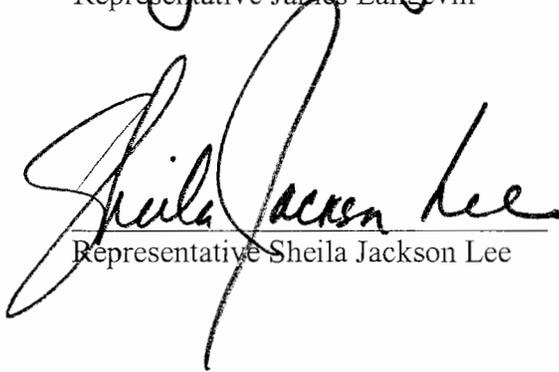
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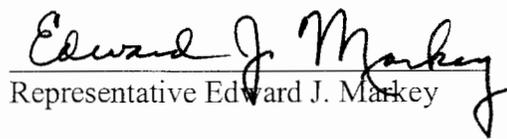
  
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Representative Henry Cuellar

  
Representative James Langevin

  
Representative Dave Reichert

  
Representative Sheila Jackson Lee

  
Representative Edward J. Markey

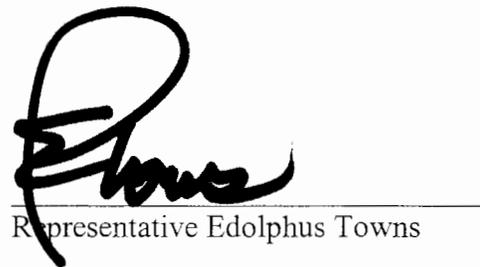
  
Representative Yvette Clarke

  
Representative Donna Christensen

  
Representative Steve Cohen

  
Representative Bill Pascrell

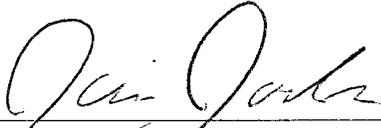
  
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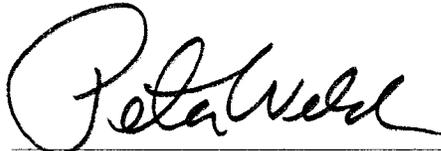
  
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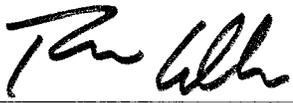
  
Representative Albio Sires

  
Representative Bart Gordon

  
Representative Tim Holden

  
Representative Jim Jordan

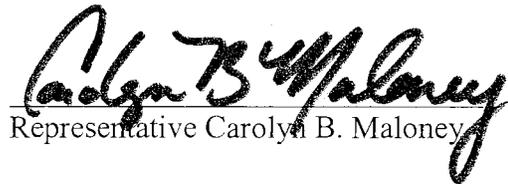
  
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Representative Tom Allen

  
Representative Corrine Brown

  
Representative Bill Delahunt

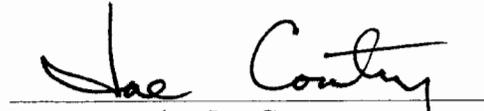
  
Representative Sue Myrick

  
Representative Carolyn B. Maloney

  
Representative Timothy Bishop

  
Representative Maurice Hinchey

  
Representative Steve Israel

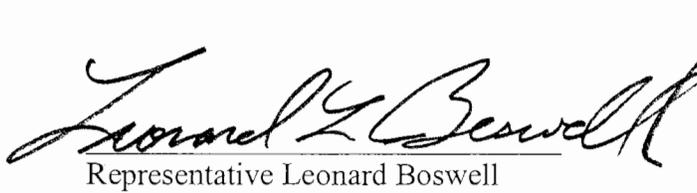
  
Representative Joe Courtney

  
Representative John B. Larson

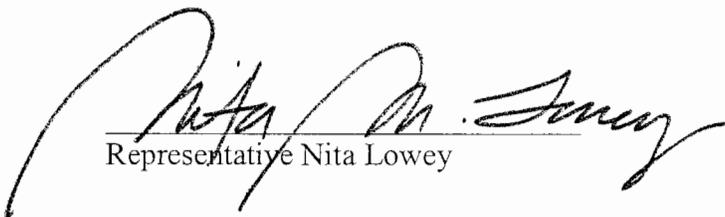
  
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Representative Patrick Murphy

  
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Representative Leonard Boswell

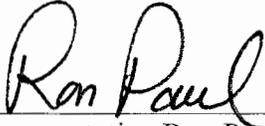
  
Representative Michael E. Capuano

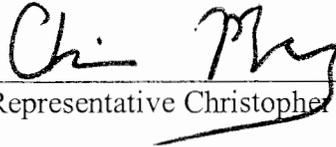
  
Representative Nita Lowey

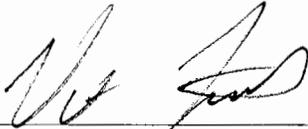
  
Representative Donald Payne

  
Representative Robin Hayes

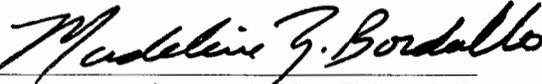
  
Representative Carolyn McCarthy

  
Representative Ron Paul

  
Representative Christopher Murphy

  
Representative Vito J. Fossella

  
Representative Geoff Davis

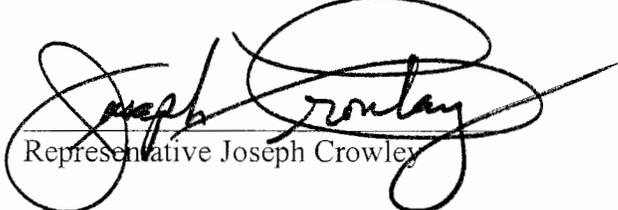
  
Representative Madeleine Z. Bordallo

  
Representative Betty Sutton

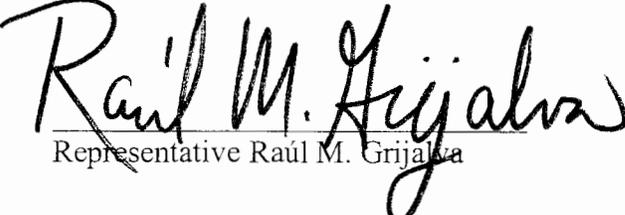
  
Representative Danny K. Davis

  
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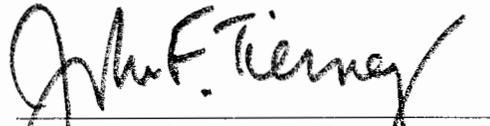
  
Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton

  
Representative Joseph Crowley

  
Representative Jane Harman

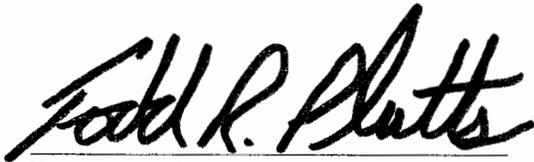
  
Representative Raúl M. Grijalva

  
Representative Betty McCollum

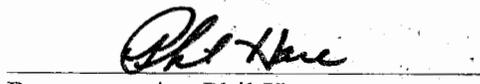
  
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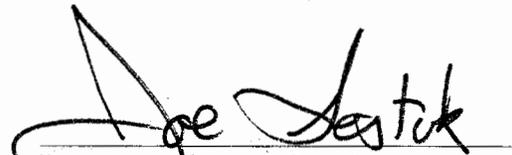
  
Representative Julia Carson

  
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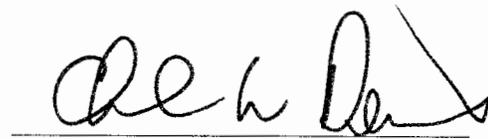
  
Representative Todd Platts

  
Representative John Shimkus (Ill. 19)

  
Representative Phil Hare

  
Representative Joe Sestak

  
Representative Alcee Hastings

  
Representative Charles W. Dent

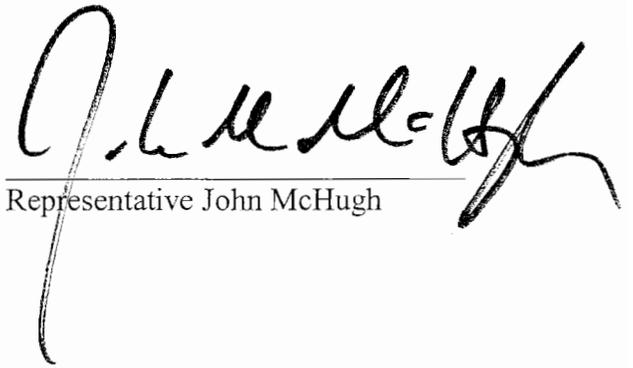
  
Representative Hal Rogers

  
Representative David Wu

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Representative Donald Manzullo

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Representative John McHugh