



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Nadler, and Ranking Member Collins,

On behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, I write to request that the *First Responder Resiliency Act of 2020*, introduced by Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL-02), be included in a future legislative package to address the COVID-19 crisis. The MCCA membership is comprised of Chiefs and Sheriffs of the sixty-nine largest law enforcement agencies in the United States and the nine largest in Canada. Collectively, the MCCA represents over 79.9 million people with a workforce of 251,082 officers and non-sworn personnel.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the already stressful job of local law enforcement. Law enforcement personnel must live with the constant threat of becoming infected, as well as the fear of infecting colleagues, family members and loved ones, and other members of the community. Furthermore, MCCA members have reported an uptick in some of the most heinous and violent types of crime that local law enforcement must respond to including shootings, domestic violence, and child exploitation.

Given the confluence of those factors, it's reasonable to infer that the COVID-19 crisis will negatively impact the mental health of some local law enforcement personnel. However, the pandemic has placed a huge strain on local law enforcement budgets and some MCCA members are concerned they won't be able to provide the mental health resources their personnel need. Rep. Kelly's *First Responder Resiliency Act* can help address these concerns. Removing the "local match" requirement for first responder job-related mental health grants can help ease the financial burden for MCCA members looking to provide or expand mental wellness programs.

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Local law enforcement doesn't have the ability to telework and the nature of the job makes it impossible for law enforcement personnel to completely cease interacting with the public. Considering there is a risk of COVID-19 transmission anytime these officers are in close proximity to another person, they are putting themselves at significant risk every time they report for duty during this pandemic. These brave men and women are on the front lines of this fight and we must ensure they are physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy throughout, and after, the COVID-19 crisis.

For the reasons described above, the MCCA strongly urges you to include provisions from the *First Responder Resiliency Act* into a future COVID-19 legislative package. Thank you for all your support for local law enforcement throughout this crisis. The MCCA looks forward to working with you as we continue to navigate these unique times. Please do not hesitate to contact me at art.acevedo@houstonpolice.org if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Art Acevedo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Art Acevedo
Chief, Houston Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association