

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

April 25, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 55 International unions and 12.5 million members represented by the AFL-CIO, I urge you to cosponsor the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (H.R. 1154). This bipartisan bill, introduced by Reps. Dan Kildee and Brian Fitzpatrick, would guarantee public safety officers collective bargaining rights in states that do not currently provide them.

Police officers, fire fighters and EMS personnel risk their lives every day to protect the public and deserve the same basic rights to discuss workplace issues with their employer that federal law grants to most other workers. While many first responders live in jurisdictions where these rights are provided, public safety personnel in 20 states lack these basic workplace protections. Providing employers and their workers with a framework to provide benefits and resolve disputes is necessary to ensure a productive workforce and a safe work environment.

The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act has historically received widespread bipartisan support in Congress. In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, the bill passed the House 314-97, with a majority of each party in favor. The bill would guarantee the right to form a union and bargain over wages, hours and working conditions, with binding arbitration to resolve disputes. It would, however, prohibit strikes or lockouts. Consistent with these minimum standards, the legislation would give states wide flexibility to write and administer their own laws.

Where it exists, collective bargaining has produced measurable staffing, training, equipment and health and safety improvements throughout the nation's fire departments—resulting in safety advances for fire fighters and improved local emergency response capabilities. We urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 1154 to provide collective bargaining rights for all the men and women who risk their lives every day to protect the public.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director  
Government Affairs Department

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**American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations**

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