

United States Senate

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Toomey, Sessions Introduce Legislation Affirming That Police Lives Also Matter

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) are sending a message to individuals targeting police officers, prosecutors, and firefighters with violence.

America has seen a rash of attacks on law enforcement officers. These include both the cold blooded, execution-style murders of law enforcement officers such as Pennsylvania State Trooper Corporal Bryon Dickson, and the killing of officers who are trying to protect others, such as Philadelphia Officer Robert Wilson, III. In response, Sens. Toomey and Sessions have introduced the *Thin Blue Line Act*, which imposes harsher penalties on individuals targeting law enforcement officers and first responders.

“It is important we send the message that police lives also matter, and that if you target a police officer with violence, you will receive a harsh penalty,” **said Sen. Toomey**. “Every day, our law enforcement officers and first responders place themselves in harm’s way to protect the rest of us. They also present tempting targets to criminals seeking retribution, and to organized crime rings seeking to discourage law enforcement officers from investigating them. Congress has long recognized that additional tools are needed to prevent such attacks on law enforcement officers.

“Now, we see one officer after another targeted simply for the uniform he or she wears. Our law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and firefighters deserve to know that their lives also matter, and they have our support. Those who would murder a person simply because he or she wears blue deserve a harsh penalty. This legislation seeks to achieve those ends.”

“The alarming spike in violence directed against the men and women entrusted with ensuring the safety and order of our society must be stopped,” **said Sen. Sessions.** “The Thin Blue Line Act will help protect our officers by bringing harsher penalties to criminals committing these vile acts and by extending the protections afforded to federal officers to our local police and first responders. This legislation honors the message sent by law-abiding Americans that we cannot stand idly by as attacks are waged upon those who serve and protect our communities.”

When a jury in a federal case considers whether to impose the death penalty, the jury must consider certain “mitigating” and “aggravating” factors. Current law states that if the murder victim was a federal law enforcement officer or prosecutor, this fact shall weigh as an aggravating factor in favor of the death penalty. The *Thin Blue Line Act* provides the same level of justice to local law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and firefighters. It also enhances the penalty when a defendant targets a law enforcement officer, prosecutor, or firefighter solely because that individual chose to protect and serve. Rep. David Jolly (R-Fla.) has introduced similar legislation in the House.

The following organizations have endorsed this legislation:

- [Concerns of Police Survivors \(C.O.P.S.\)](#)
- [Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association](#)
- Fraternal Order of Police
- International Union of Police Associations, AFL-CIO
- Major County Sheriffs’ Association
- National Association of Police Organizations
- National District Attorneys Association
- National Sheriffs’ Association
- National Troopers Coalition
- Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association

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