



International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators

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2017 ISSUE BRIEF: THE SEAN COLLIER ACT

PROBLEM

While the federal government provides death benefits to families of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, sworn officers employed by **private colleges and universities** are not covered by this important death benefit provided to other officers who give the ultimate sacrifice.

BACKGROUND

When Officer Sean Collier was shot and killed by the Boston Marathon bombers, he was a sworn police officer employed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in their university police department. Officer Collier was doing his job – working to protect others – when he was specifically targeted and killed because he was a police officer.

But because MIT is a nonprofit, private institution, Officer Collier's family was ineligible for federal death benefits paid to families of other law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. Officers at other institutions have been denied eligibility for benefits in past years, from Butler University (IN) to Brown University (RI).

Thousands of sworn officers work to protect students, faculty and staff at our nation's private colleges and universities. These officers lay their lives on the line for their communities just as other officers do in other jurisdictions. Currently, if a municipal police officer and police officer employed by a private institution of higher education are working together on an accident scene or investigation and both are killed by the same action, the family of the municipal police officer will receive the federal death benefit and the family of the private institution police officer will not.

We must ensure that all sworn officers – regardless of what law enforcement agency employs them – have peace of mind that their families will be taken care of as they selflessly put their lives on the line, willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in service to others.

This measure would apply only to state licensed or certified police or peace officers employed as such by private institutions. The financial cost to the federal government is small given the number of cases involved, and trivial relative to the extraordinary sacrifices made by these officers.

SOLUTION

In the last Congress, bipartisan legislation was introduced in the House and Senate to remedy this disparity. We urge Congress to make enacting this legislation a priority.

CONTACT

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