

The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/29/76 - Remarks Upon the Signing of H.R. 366: Public Safety Officers' Benefits Acts of 1976” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

SIGNING CEREMONY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS'

BENEFITS ACT OF 1976

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1976

TWO DAYS AGO IN MIAMI, I DECLARED A MAJOR NEW
ESCALATION IN AMERICA'S WAR ON CRIME. I OUTLINED PLANS:

-- TO COMPLETELY REVISE THE FEDERAL CRIMINAL CODE;

-- TO EXPAND THE SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED

"CAREER CRIMINAL" PROGRAM;

-- TO IMPOSE MANDATORY SENTENCES FOR CERTAIN

FEDERAL CRIMES;

-- TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF PREVENTING JUVENILE CRIME;

-- AND TO TAKE OTHER STEPS TO HELP MAKE THE

FEDERAL FIGHT AGAINST CRIME A MODEL FOR STATE AND LOCAL

EFFORTS THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

THERE IS NO MORE IMPORTANT WORK TO BE DONE IN OUR
SOCIETY THAN ENSURING DOMESTIC TRANQUILLITY, AS THE
CONSTITUTION DEMANDS, AND PROTECTING THE LIVES AND PROPERTY
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

THIS MEANS THAT AMERICA'S 600 THOUSAND FEDERAL,
STATE AND LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS ARE AMONG OUR MOST
IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE CITIZENS.

WE OWE THESE DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANTS MORE THAN
GRATITUDE, MORE THAN PRAISE. WE OWE THEM AND THEIR
FAMILIES THE FULLEST MEASURE OF PROTECTION THAT WE CAN
PROVIDE THEM.

WE ARE NOW PROVIDING THE MOST SOPHISTICATED
EQUIPMENT, THE BEST TRAINING, THE GREATEST FINANCIAL AND
MORAL SUPPORT WE CAN.

BUT IT IS THESE COURAGEOUS MEN AND WOMEN THEMSELVES
WHO STAND ON THE FRONT LINES OF AMERICA'S WAR ON CRIME.

THEY TAKE THE RISKS. THEY SUFFER THE INJURIES.

THEY ARE THE ONES WHO LAY THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE EVERY DAY
FOR THE REST OF US.

IN 1975, 126 POLICE OFFICERS WERE KILLED IN THE LINE
OF DUTY. ⁴⁹ FORTY-NINE MORE WERE KILLED IN THE FIRST
⁴ FOUR MONTHS OF THIS YEAR.

VIOLENT DEATH HAS ALSO CLAIMED ITS GRIM TOLL OF
FIREFIGHTERS AND OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS WHOSE COURAGE
equally
IS ~~NO LESS~~ ADMIRABLE, WHOSE JOBS ARE NO LESS ESSENTIAL,
just as precious
WHOSE LIVES ARE ~~NO LESS~~ MOURNED.

THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN FULLY COMPENSATE FOR THIS
LOSS OF LIFE IN THE PUBLIC'S SERVICE. BUT WE HAVE A CLEAR
OBLIGATION TO HELP AS MUCH AS WE CAN.

THE CONGRESS HAS PASSED ^{*legislation*} THE ~~BILL~~, H.R. 366,
THE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS ACT OF 1976.

THIS LEGISLATION PROVIDES THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL PAY
A 50 THOUSAND DOLLAR BENEFIT TO THE SURVIVING DEPENDENTS
OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS WHO ARE KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY•

THIS INCLUDES NOT ONLY POLICEMEN, BUT FIREMEN,
PRISON GUARDS, PAROLE AND PROBATION OFFICERS AND
COURT OFFICIALS•

THIS ACT DEMONSTRATES THE ESTEEM OF A FREE SOCIETY
FOR THOSE WHOM IT ENTRUSTS WITH OUR PUBLIC AND PERSONAL
SAFETY•

WITH GREAT PRIDE AND PLEASURE, I WILL NOW SIGN
THIS ACT INTO LAW•

END OF TEXT