

Mr. ROSE of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for his leadership and thank him for working with me on this effort. I also thank Congressman PASCRELL for his extraordinary leadership in this regard.

I stand in strong support of our bill, the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act, because when this pandemic came to the United States, one thing that was never, ever in doubt was that our first responders would put on their uniforms and they would risk their lives to keep us safe.

It was never in doubt because whenever there has been a crisis, whether it came to my city or to our country, they have always rushed to be our first line of defense. On 9/11, they rushed into the towers. During Hurricane Sandy, they braved a superstorm. And now, during the pandemic, they are on the front lines against an invisible enemy that has claimed more than 100,000 lives nationwide.

Think of the toll this pandemic has taken on our Nation's heroes. Think of all those who have gone months without seeing their kids, their spouses, their own parents. Think of those who have gotten sick. Think of those who have lost their lives.

The very least that Congress can do right now is give our police officers, our EMTs, our corrections officers, our firefighters, our public safety officers the peace of mind that, if the worst shall happen, we will be there for them and their families.

□ 2045

When this bill becomes law—and it will become law—the family of an officer who was catastrophically injured or lost their life will not have to jump through hoops or prove that it was because of the coronavirus. They won't have to spend 10 years litigating, trying to convince the government that their sacrifice actually meant something.

Today, we are not cutting red tape; we are stopping the red tape from happening in the first place. This effort has bipartisan support. And, nonetheless—and only in Washington, D.C., is this possible—it has yet to cross the finish line. Our officers cannot afford to wait, cannot afford to wait for politics. We can't use our cops and our firefighters as political pawns.

My city has lost nearly a dozen FDNY heroes, over 40 NYPD officers, and so many more of our brave officers across the United States of America.

Every Member of Congress loves to take pictures with our first responders. We love to thank them. We love to rely on them. They protect our families when we go to Washington, D.C. Well, today is the day we see who is willing to do more than offer them pretty words on Facebook. Who is willing to do more than take a selfie?

Today, we see who is willing to help our first responders, like they wouldn't hesitate to be there for us. God bless you and God bless the United States of

America. Let's be there for our first responders.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer strong support for the Public Safety Officer Pandemic Response Act and to just take a little journey down memory lane.

Just 2 days ago we honored the fallen that have sacrificed their lives for this Nation for our freedom. We could not help many of us who held Memorial Day ceremonies for the fallen and to acknowledge their families who at that time, as well, acknowledge the nearing 100,000 mark of those who died from COVID-19.

As a Member of the United States Congress here during 9/11, right here in this Capitol, watching the billowing smoke from the Pentagon, hearing about the Trade Center, and of course, about the plane that no one could find that wound up in Pennsylvania, in all of those instances, first responders rushed to the scene. They were on the front lines.

I remember that; heroic actions. But at the same time, I remember, as a Member of the Homeland Security Committee, the long and arduous journey, the suffering that these individuals had to go through to receive ultimate compensation, even just a few months ago, or about a year ago, reminded of the first responders that were in the Judiciary Committee pleading again for compensation through the 9/11 bill.

I believe that where we are today is the right direction to get in front of and to help those who are still on the front lines, firefighters and techs, law enforcement officers in a variety of service, they are still there, many of whom started with COVID-19 without the right PPEs, as many of them will tell you. Some who have already lost their lives. Many that continue to suffer with the remnants or the effects of COVID-19.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the sponsors and thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. NADLER. I want to thank Mr. PASCRELL and Mr. ROSE for all of the efforts to get in front, to say that the Nation does care. Because right now, Madam Speaker, as we are on this floor, there are emergency workers rushing to someone's home to be able to take them to a medical facility to save their lives, or they may be in an emergency room right now. So COVID-19 has not ended. That is why we are wearing masks. COVID-19 has taken 100,000 lives with no end in sight.

So I rise in support to be able to provide these lifesaving front-liners the safety net that they need, and the compensation that they need, in order for us to say more than a thank you, but to acknowledge and honor them for their service.

Let us hope that we can, as a Nation, follow the instructions of social distancing, testing, wearing masks, that we can overcome this. But all the time that we are taking that journey, we will be looking to these first responders to be on the first line.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time, and I ask our colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I am disappointed that we are not taking up the bipartisan Senate-passed POS bill that had a clean fix to this issue. So I do want to say, I am disappointed that we are not running the Senate bill, which again, was bipartisan.

But I do want to say, I support our Nation's first responders, and I truly believe it is vital that they receive the benefits they have earned. So I urge my colleagues to support our Nation's public service officers.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 crisis in this country has taken many lives and impacted every community. In our national response, there are many areas in which we know we must do better and do more to address the public health emergency and the economic impact on our people.

This bill, which expands an existing program in several important ways will help address the tragic circumstances of public safety officers who are disabled by or die from this virus. It is one piece of the overall effort, but an important one.

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, ask my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of H.R. 6509 today.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6509, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2109

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro