



# Vermont Police Association

*Representing Vermont's Finest*

Post Office Box 700  
Shelburne, Vermont 05482  
www.vtvpa.org

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March 13, 2024

To: **Chairman Thomas Stevens and Members of the House Committee on General and Housing**

*Re: H.695, An act relating to survivor benefits for law enforcement officers*

Honorable Members of the House Committee on General and Housing,

I am here with you today to testify as the President of the Vermont Police Association and to offer our strong support for bill H.695, which aims to rectify the existing disparity in survivor benefits for law enforcement officers who make the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. This bill represents a crucial step towards ensuring equity among all Vermont first responders and their families.

Law enforcement officers dedicate their lives to protecting and serving our communities. They put themselves in harm's way every day to keep our communities safe. Tragically, some pay the ultimate price in service to their fellow citizens. When an officer falls in the line of duty, it is not just a loss for their family and colleagues, but for our entire community.

However, the current survivor benefits system does not adequately reflect the sacrifice made by these brave men and women. Surviving families often face financial hardships and uncertainty in the aftermath of such a profound loss. It is our moral obligation as a society to ensure that they are supported and cared for in their time of need.

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Executive Committee Members

**Vice-Presidents:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tom Chenette Burl. PD, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kelly Price VT F&W

**President Emeritus:** Ben Herrick RCSD **Secretary:** Diane Shortsleeve SBPD (Ret.) **Treasurer:** Dan Boyer SBPD



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Bill H.695 represents an opportunity to right this wrong and provide equal and fair compensation to all survivors of first responders who make the ultimate sacrifice. By extending equitable survivor benefits to law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMTs and other emergency personnel, we demonstrate our commitment to honoring their service and supporting their families.

I urge you to support bill H.695 and ensure its swift passage through the legislative process. Let us stand together in solidarity with all of our first responders and their families, ensuring that they receive the recognition and support they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher R. Hoar  
President  
Vermont Police Association

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## ADDENDUM

**The Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc., (ODMP)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to honoring America's fallen law enforcement officers. More than 26,000 officers have died in the line of duty in the United States since 1776 and ODMP is honored to preserve their memories and give friends, family, other officers, and citizens alike the opportunity to remember the fallen and honor their sacrifices.

<https://www.odmp.org/search/browse/vermont>

Total line of duty deaths in Vermont: 29

First recorded: [Officer Thomas Hewlett](#) (1814)

Past twenty years: [Trooper Kyle Young](#) (2015), [Officer Jessica Ebbighausen](#) (2023)

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