Houses Passes PSOB for EMTs, Medics of Volunteer and Non-Profit Agencies

NAEMT has been supporting the Dale Long Bill for many years

Created: June 28, 2012

Federal benefits for volunteer and non-profit EMS personnel who die in the line of duty took another step forward Wednesday when the the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the measure.

For several years, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., has pushed for legislation to grant the families of volunteers and non-profit agencies the same PSOB funds that firefighters, police officers and career EMS providers receive.

Leahy has led the charge for the change after one of his constituents, Dale Long, was killed in an ambulance crash in June 2009.

"We have been working to address this gap in the federal program for some time, and the loss of Dale Long reminded everyone that first responders of many uniforms literally put their lives at risk every day," Leahy said in a prepared statement. "These brave emergency professionals never let their communities down when a call comes in, and no one asks the lifesavers at an emergency scene whether they work for the federal government, a state government, a local government, or a nonprofit agency. This provision will erase that unnecessary distinction from the PSOB program."

Congress created the PSOB program more than three decades ago to provide tangible help to the surviving families of police, firefighters and medics who lose their lives or are disabled in the line of duty.

NAEMT has pushed for the PSOB change for many years, and personnel lobbied once again at its annual EMS on the Hill day in May.