

# Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Set to Begin at National Level

*The first time a government organization will monitor law enforcement suicide and attempted suicide the way data is collected on officers killed and assaulted.*

WORCESTER, MA, UNITED STATES, March 15, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Since 2016, [Blue H.E.L.P.](#) (Honor. Educate. Lead. Prevent.) has been supporting the families of law enforcement officers lost to suicide. It is the objective of Blue H.E.L.P. to reduce mental health stigma and bring awareness to suicide and mental health issues impacting our law enforcement community. Between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2020, Blue H.E.L.P. has recorded data on 919 suicides of police and corrections officers of all duty statuses. For 2021, to date 19 incidents have been submitted to recognize the lives of those who serve our nation with valor.

Because of the efforts of those individuals willing to submit this vital information, there has been a culture shift in Law Enforcement (LE). Agencies and departments are starting to implement wellness programs and major national organizations have begun to further the mission Blue H.E.L.P. has established - reduce mental health stigma through education, advocate for benefits for those suffering from post-traumatic stress, acknowledge the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers we lost to suicide, support families after a suicide and to bring awareness to suicide and mental health issues.

Adding to the awareness Blue H.E.L.P. has strived to create, on June 16, 2020, the President of the United States signed Public Law 116-143, S. 2746, Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act ([LES DCA](#)). The LES DCA mandates the establishment of the Law Enforcement Officers Suicide Data Collection and directs the Attorney General, through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to institute the new data collection to better understand and prevent suicides among current and past law enforcement officers of federal, state, local, and tribal agencies and will include corrections and 911 operators. The collection is required to collect and report annually on law enforcement officer suicides and attempted suicides. "Through this data collection, we are opening up many opportunities to address the mental health needs of our officers. It gives me great joy in being able to tell an officer today, hold on a little bit longer, because change and help is here" said Sharonda Calderon, Blue H.E.L.P. Program Director and suicide widow.

This is the first time a government organization will monitor law enforcement suicide and attempted suicide, like the way data is collected on officers killed and assaulted. Established under the FBI, the information will be comprised of data voluntarily submitted to the collection.

Families cannot self-report on behalf of their loved ones. Retired officers are included in the collection but are historically more difficult to track.

To implement this project, the FBI has established a task force which includes Blue H.E.L.P., subject matter experts specializing in LE mental health and statistical collection and analysis, and other major law enforcement organizations. This task force will assist in creating a data collection based on the requirements established within the legislation. The task force will also assist in marketing and outreach and establishing data policy. The collection tool, which will be piloted in June 2021, will be accessed by law enforcement organizations that have a valid Originating Agency Identifier Number. A planned release for law enforcement contributions to the collection is scheduled for January 2022.

This project offers the largest spotlight yet on law enforcement suicide. The LESDCA provides a pathway for the future and, much-needed attention at the federal level, for an issue that has not received the funding, resources and support it has desperately needed for generations. This is a monumental step forward in recognizing the emotional toll the job takes on an officer and, hope for families who have lost officers to suicide. The hope is this legislation will provide much needed information and data to help prevent future suicides.

Although this effort has resulted in success, meaningful action which has not received deserved attention, is additional legislation proposed over the last two years. Unfortunately, two bills, the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2020 - which would expand PSOB benefits to officers who die by suicide or are disabled as a result of traumatic experiences - and the COPS Counseling Act - which would make law enforcement officer peer support communications confidential, and possibly change the landscape of support - did not receive a vote and will need to be reintroduced to be considered.

The success of these endeavors relies heavily on the law enforcement community. To help support these efforts please contact us at <https://bluehelp.org/> or let your Congressman know you would like to see S.3434 - COPS Counseling Act and H.R. 7568 (116th): Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2020 reintroduced and passed.

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