

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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June 2, 2026

Mr. Bill Alexander
Chief Executive Officer
National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund
444 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Alexander:

I am writing to respectfully urge you to add the late law enforcement officers Howard Liebengood, Jeffrey Smith, Kyle DeFreytag, and Gunther Hashida to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. This is a matter of considerable public importance, and I hope you can address it with the proper attention and dispatch.

I also request information from you that would explain the Memorial Fund's failure so far to honor the memory, sacrifice and careers of these officers by making them part of the Memorial. Each of them heroically defended 535 Members of Congress and our family members and staff, Vice President Mike Pence and his family and staff, and American constitutional democracy itself against a violent and rampaging insurrectionary mob that attacked the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021. On that bloody and fateful day, these officers engaged in extraordinary acts of bravery, service, and devotion to our country—and their profession—which marked the tragic culmination of their years of successful service to America as law enforcement officers. Our forces were so outnumbered on that day that the absence of these four could have led to a different and far more horrific result. They each made a big difference.

After receiving brutal physical and mental injuries from the “medieval-style combat” (as described by Sergeant Aquilino Gonell) which took place at the Capitol over many hours on January 6th, Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, and Hashida each took his own life in the days and weeks that followed. Everyone agrees that, had they died of physical injuries exclusively, these officers would be included in the Memorial today, and I would not need to write this letter. However, because they succumbed as a result of some terrifying mixture of physical, mental, and emotional injuries, they have been excluded to this day, more than five years after their deaths, to the continuing shock and pain of their loving families, friends, and fellow officers.

The mission of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) is to “honor the fallen, tell the story of American law enforcement and make it safer for those who

serve.”¹ But that story is radically incomplete without properly acknowledging *all* of the officers who lost their lives as a result of the mob violence that drove the storming of the Capitol in order to disrupt the joint session of Congress. More than 140 law enforcement officers² were injured during the attack, many suffering severe injuries including concussions, traumatic brain injuries, crushed spinal disks, fractured ribs, heart attacks, strokes, and chemical burns.³ These serious physical injuries, along with the profuse verbal and mental abuse accompanying the attacks, in many cases produced profound mental and psychological wounds and suffering as well.

United States Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, an excellent officer whose wonderful family I know, was viciously assaulted and sprayed with chemical irritants on January 6th, and he suffered two strokes as he fought to protect Congress and defend our democracy.⁴ He died the day after the attack from his physical injuries.⁵ He has been included in the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

But the mob inflicted both savage physical and mental injuries, and the officers who struggled to defend the Capitol faced incalculable mental anguish from the brutal events of the day. For some of the officers, the magnitude of the physical pain, mental and emotional suffering, political betrayal, and anti-police violence was too much to bear.

As you are aware, the profound trauma of these events led directly to the deaths by suicide of Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, and Hashida. Although their friend and fellow officer Brian Sicknick has been rightfully added to the Memorial, these four officers remain completely unrecognized and their deaths unacknowledged by the Memorial. This enormous slight to these officers and their families depreciates the true sacrifice and heroic service offered not only by law enforcement officers who leave us by suicide but by all law enforcement officers mentally and emotionally wounded by violence and trauma on the job.

It is incomprehensible to me that these officers have not been recognized yet.

Howard Liebengood served the U.S. Capitol Police honorably for 15 years. His family has a legacy of service to Congress; his father once served as the Senate Sergeant at Arms.⁶

¹ *Suicides to Be Considered for Inclusion on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial*, NATL. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEM. FUND (Mar. 22, 2024), <https://nleomf.org/suicides-to-be-considered-for-inclusion-on-the-national-law-enforcement-officers-memorial/>.

² Mary Clare Jalonick, ‘*A Difficult Year.*’ *How Officers Who Defended the Capitol are Grappling with Efforts to Downplay Jan. 6 Violence*, PBS NEWS (Jan. 5, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/a-difficult-year-how-officers-who-defended-the-capitol-are-grappling-with-efforts-to-downplay-jan-6-violence>.

³ Michael Kaplan & Cassidy McDonald, *At Least 17 Police Officers Remain out of Work with Injuries from the Capitol Attack*, CBS NEWS (June 4, 2021), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/capitol-police-injuries-riot/>.

⁴ Peter Hermann & Spencer S. Hsu, *Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, Who Engaged Rioters, Suffered Two Strokes and Died of Natural Causes, Officials Say*, WASH. POST (Apr. 19, 2021), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/brian-sicknick-death-strokes/2021/04/19/36d2d310-617e-11eb-afbe-9a11a127d146_story.html.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Nicholas Fandos & Luke Broadwater, *Police Officer Who Responded to Capitol Riot Dies Off Duty*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 10, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/10/us/politics/capitol-police-howard-liebengood-dies.html>.

Jeffrey Smith was a 12-year veteran of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). Rioters hit him in the head with a metal pole during the attack. His wife explained that he then slid into a deep depression lasting until his death.⁷

Kyle DeFreytag was only 26 years old and served MPD for four years.⁸ He was known for his kindness, quick wit, and great sense of humor.⁹

Gunther Hashida served MPD for 18 years, including serving on the Emergency Response Team of the Special Operations Division, and was also a loving and attentive father to three children.¹⁰

The patriotism and service of these officers must be recognized alongside all of the officers who have nobly served and died in the line of duty. Had the riots and violence never taken place on January 6th, these officers would be alive today.

In 2024, the NLEOMF Board of Directors recognized that the perilous and traumatic events that law enforcement officers experience in discharge of their duties can result in suicides. The board thus voted to include deaths by suicide that occurred on or after January 1, 2019, in the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.¹¹ Although the announcement of the board's decision remains posted on the NLEOMF website without qualification, a separate page explains:

In 2025, NLEOMF received a number of cases for consideration. Review of these submissions over several months surfaced complex issues and raised a number of questions not fully contemplated or addressed by the criteria as originally approved. As a result, in the fall of 2025, the NLEOMF Board voted to pause the review of all death-by-suicide cases. This pause was implemented to allow the Board adequate time to further study the underlying issues, assess the implications of the submitted cases, and determine whether additional refinement or amendment of the criteria is warranted before any further consideration proceeds.¹²

⁷ Peter Hermann & Meagan Flynn, *D.C. Retirement Board Grants Full Pension to Widow of Officer Who Took His Own Life After Capitol Riot*, WASH. POST (Mar. 11, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/03/09/capitol-riot-suicide-police-pension/>; Shaila Dewan, *He Killed Himself After the Jan. 6 Riot. Did He Die in the Line of Duty?*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 5, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/29/us/police-suicides-capitol-riot.html>.

⁸ Kevin Breuninger & Dan Mangan, *Two More Police Officers Die by Suicide After Defending Capitol During Riot by Pro-Trump Mob, Tally Now 4*, CNBC (Aug. 2, 2021), <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/08/02/3rd-police-officer-gunther-hashida-kills-himself-after-capitol-riot-by-trump-mob.html>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Suicides to be Considered for Inclusion on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial*, NATL. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEM. FUND (Mar. 22, 2024), <https://nleomf.org/suicides-to-be-considered-for-inclusion-on-the-national-law-enforcement-officers-memorial/>.

¹² *Submit a Fallen Officer's Name*, NATL. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEM. FUND (last visited May 18, 2026), <https://nleomf.org/memorial/fallen-heroes/submit-a-fallen-officers-name/>.

Whatever challenges those 2025 cases may have presented, surely these four officers merit prompt consideration and action for inclusion in the Memorial.

I urge you to add Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, and Hashida to the Memorial to honor their sacrifice and ensure that the Memorial accurately reflects the loss of law enforcement lives that occurred as a result of the violence on January 6, 2021.

Additionally, in order to more fully understand why Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, and Hashida still have not been added to the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial, I ask that you provide answers to the following questions and produce the following information as soon as possible, but not later than 5:00 p.m. on June 16, 2026:

1. Of the officers currently listed on the Memorial, did any of them die by suicide? If so, how many officers are currently listed on the Memorial who died by suicide? Please provide the date that each officer, who died by suicide, was added to the Memorial.
2. Does the NLEOMF plan to add Officers Howard Liebengood, Jeffrey Smith, Kyle DeFreytag, and Gunther Hashida to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial? If so, when will they be added? If not, please explain why they will not be added.
3. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund website explains that the process of adding a fallen officer to the Memorial begins with the fallen officer's employing agency submitting an Officer Data Form.
 - a. Did the U.S. Capitol Police submit an Officer Data Form for Officer Howard Liebengood? If so, please provide a copy of the completed form.
 - b. Did MPD submit an Officer Data Form for Jeffrey Smith? If so, please provide a copy of the completed form.
 - c. Did MPD submit an Officer Data Form for Kyle DeFreytag? If so, please provide a copy of the completed form.
 - d. Did MPD submit an Officer Data Form for Gunther Hashida? If so, please provide a copy of the completed form.
4. Did the NLEOMF Research Department review Officer Data Forms or supporting documentation for Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, or Hashida?
5. Prior to the pause in consideration of officer deaths by suicide, did the Memorial Names Committee review the deaths of Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, or Hashida to determine if the circumstances of their death met the Memorial's Criteria for Inclusion that were in effect prior to the pause? If so, please describe what determinations, if any, were made as a result of this review for each officer.

6. Following their review, the Memorial Names Committee typically votes to approve, deny, or place a hold on a case. Prior to the pause in the consideration of deaths by suicide, did the Memorial Names Committee vote to approve, deny, or place a hold on the deaths of Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, or Hashida? If so, please explain what action the Memorial Names Committee voted to take.
7. The NLEOMF website notes that “NLEOMF received a number of cases [of officers who died by suicide] for consideration.”¹³ Please provide the names and agencies of all officers who died by suicide that were submitted for consideration.
8. The March 22, 2024, announcement of the vote to include deaths by suicide specifies that “NLEOMF’s Law Enforcement Officers Fatalities Report will reflect the addition of this new category beginning with the 2024 report, which will release in January 2025.” However, the 2024 End-of-Year Law Enforcement Officers Fatalities Report,¹⁴ which was published before the pause in the consideration of deaths by suicide, does not include the word “suicide.”
 - a. Is NLEOMF aware of any officers who died by suicide in 2024?
 - b. If NLEOMF is aware of any officers who died by suicide in 2024, are those deaths reflected in the data in the report?
 - c. If NLEOMF is aware of any officers who died by suicide in 2024, why is suicide not mentioned in the report, which was published prior to the NLEOMF Board’s decision to pause the consideration of deaths by suicide?
9. Between the 2024 announcement of the inclusion of deaths by suicide and the fall 2025 vote to pause the consideration of these deaths, officer names were added to the Memorial in April 2025. Did any of the officers who were added in 2025 die by suicide?
10. The NLEOMF website notes that, “The Board recognizes the profound emotions surrounding these losses and is working to address the criteria as expeditiously as possible.”¹⁵ When will NLEOMF resume consideration of the inclusion of officer deaths by suicide?
11. The NLEOMF website explains that the “policy allowing certain deaths by suicide to be considered for inclusion on the National Law Enforcement Officers

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *2024 End-of-Year Law Enforcement Officers Fatalities Report*, NATL. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEM. FUND (Jan. 2025), <https://nleomf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-Fatalites-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

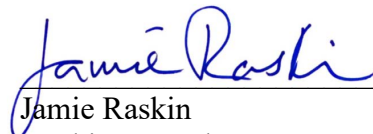
¹⁵ *Submit a Fallen Officer’s Name*, NATL. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEM. FUND (last visited May 18, 2026), <https://nleomf.org/memorial/fallen-heroes/submit-a-fallen-officers-name/>.

Memorial” was “subject to a case-by-case review using the newly established criteria.”¹⁶ What were these criteria?

12. When NLEOMF resumes consideration of officer deaths by suicide, what criteria will NLEOMF use to determine which officer deaths by suicide are included in the Memorial?
13. Did anyone ask, instruct, or pressure the NLEOMF Board to pause consideration of officer deaths by suicide? If so, who?
14. Please provide copies of any correspondence to NLEOMF from anyone who opposed the inclusion of officers who died by suicide.
15. Please provide copies of any correspondence to NLEOMF from anyone who opposed Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, or Hashida being added to the Memorial.
16. Please describe any other outreach, such as phone calls, emails, texts, or meetings, to NLEOMF from anyone who opposed adding Officers Liebengood, Smith, DeFreytag, or Hashida to the Memorial.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this serious matter.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member

cc: Mr. Michael G. Sullivan, Chief of Police
United States Capitol Police

Mr. Jeffery W. Carroll, Interim Chief of Police
Metropolitan Police Department

The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman

¹⁶ *Id.*