

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS BENEFIT EXTENDED TO EMS VOLUNTEERS

On Wednesday, January 2, 2013, President Obama signed into law language which will extend coverage under the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) program to paramedics and EMTs who die in the line of duty and are employed by, or volunteer for, a private non-profit EMS organization. The President signed the EMS coverage language into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (S. 3254). In November, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) offered the EMS coverage language as an amendment to S. 3254. The Senate passed the amendment (S. Amdt. 2955) by a vote of 85 to 11 and several days later passed S. 3254. The House had already passed its version of the Defense Authorization Bill as well as the EMS coverage language in a separate bill. The Conference Committee on S. 3254 agreed to include the Leahy amendment language in the final conference report which was overwhelmingly approved by both chambers. As a result of this provision, paramedics and EMTs employed by a private non-profit EMS organization now will be eligible for a \$315,000 federal death benefit.
