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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515

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June 4, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

In the past week, Americans have expressed their outrage over the murder of George Floyd and the systemic racism that still persists throughout our country. After years of discussion, we must take action to ensure that police forces are properly trained and prepared to protect every person in our communities. This requires a multi-faceted strategy that addresses the factors that race and mental health play in interactions with law enforcement. This bill, H.R. 2698, the Law Enforcement Training for Mental Health Crisis Response Act addresses the issue of training about mental health crises.

This bill provides grant funding to conduct behavioral health crisis response training for law enforcement departments at the state, local, and tribal levels. Law enforcement officers are often the first called to respond when an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis, and without adequate training the results are often tragic. One in four people killed by police is a person who suffers from mental illness, yet there is no dedicated funding to train officers about how to recognize, deescalate, and respond to people in crisis. In these high-tension and high-risk situations, officers need an understanding of mental illness and mental health crises to respond appropriately and to ensure the safety of both the individual suffering and the officer.

This is a bipartisan solution to a problem that has needlessly cost the lives of too many Americans. The protests across the country have once again highlighted the immediate need for criminal justice reform. It is critical that we respond to those needs with a holistic strategy. This bill is a key component of that strategy. As you determine the legislation to be considered on the floor, we strongly urge you to bring the Law Enforcement Training for Mental Health Crisis Response Act up for a vote.

Sincerely,

Kendra S. Horn
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



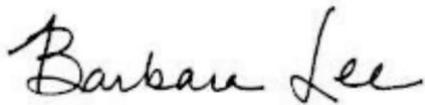
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