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NOTICE: In order to protect constituents and out of an abundance of caution during the COVID-19 crisis, I've asked my Illinois staff to telework and our in-state offices remain in remote work status. Thank you for your patience and understanding at this time.

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SEN. DUCKWORTH TO INTRODUCE BILL THAT RECOGNIZES SUICIDE AS 'LINE OF DUTY DEATH'

Source: WSIL

(WSIL)-- Families of officers who died by suicide could soon get assistance in claiming federal benefits.

The Public Safety Office Support Act would amend requirements for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program.

Currently, PSOB provides financial support to families of fallen first responders who died in the line of duty or are permanently disabled due to a physical injury sustained at work.

The act would recognize suicides as 'line of duty' deaths according to U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Illinois) the bill's chief sponsor.

Duckworth says the bill will also designate post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and acute stress disorder as a 'line of duty' injury. That will allow officers with PTSD to apply for disability benefits.

Duckworth says the bill will have an enormous impact for families of first responders, including families of officers who survived the January 6 attack.

"It will now be presumed that your mental health injury is a result of you engaging in doing your job," Duckworth said. "We have to understand that a wound to the brain is just as traumatic as an amputation or some other injury that you receive."

Duckworth plans to introduce the bill to the Senate next week.

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