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HEALTH
SOCIAL SECURITY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0916

July 22, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

When Congress reconvenes in September, I urge you to schedule an immediate vote on legislation that would toughen penalties against cop killers.

Every day, brave men and women put their lives on the line to protect their communities. But over the last several weeks police officers have been targeted for violence simply because they wear the blue uniform. These senseless attacks on police must end. Across the country, Americans have come together to condemn the acts of violence against police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge. But sympathy and support are not enough to keep our first responders safe.

Congress must take action to help end these attacks. The sick individuals who target those who keep us safe must face severe consequences for their actions.

The *Thin Blue Line Act* sponsored by Rep. David Jolly (H.R. 814) will toughen penalties for federal cases involving the murder of a police officer. Prosecutors and firefighters are also covered by the bill, which has the support of the Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, Major County Sheriff's Association, International Union of Police Associations, National Sheriffs' Association, Florida Sheriffs' Association and more.

The bill could serve as a deterrent for violence against police, according to the president of the National Association of Police Organizations, Mick McHale. "Establishing stricter penalties for those who harm law enforcement officers will deter violence against officers and help keep communities safe, which is why it is vital that Congress pass this legislation," McHale said.

Sadly, the number of American law enforcement deaths from shootings has jumped 72 percent over this time last year, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

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President Barack Obama recently wrote an open letter to American law enforcement, saying “we have your back.” Congress should adopt the same approach and immediately pass the *Thin Blue Line Act*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vern Buchanan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vern" and last name "Buchanan" clearly distinguishable.

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress