

THE SENATE OF TEXAS

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SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
State Capitol, 2S.1
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your continued commitment to law enforcement and first responders of Texas. You have always been a champion for the men and women who are risking their lives daily to keep us safe. I applaud you for stating, "The State of Texas is committed to supporting the EMS and first responder workforce." I write you today to ask your assistance in redoubling Texas' unwavering support for the first responders who have contracted COVID-19.

You have made great efforts to ensure that law enforcement and first responders across the state have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). However, even with proper use of PPE, there is no guarantee that a first responder will not contract the virus. In addition, as we know, the duties of a first responder are physical, labor intensive, and stressful, and proper use of PPE is not always possible in these situations. While the state's first responders always put themselves in harm's way to protect us, their dedication to service is even stronger, and more commendable, during this pandemic. The danger of contracting COVID-19 is perhaps the greatest threat facing first responders, which is why I write today to humbly request that you support the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas's (CLEAT) request and direct the Texas Department of Insurance and the Texas Worker's Compensation Commission to rule that any Texas First Responder testing positive for COVID-19 be presumed to have contracted the disease in the Line of Duty.

CLEAT believes that current law does not adequately protect first responders who are impacted by this disease. The state has already enacted similar legislation that presumes similar illnesses are contracted in the Line of Duty. Until the Legislature meets again in 2021, you have the authority to seek parity with this legislation and protect first responders from lost wages and treatment costs. I pray that no first responder will die in Texas due to COVID-19, but if they do, they should receive full honors and benefits as any



other Line of Duty death. Texas must show that it recognizes the dangers associated with being a dedicated first responder, especially during this unprecedented time.

I thank you in advance for your consideration on behalf of all first responders in Texas. Your efforts to assure Texas heroes that our state is firmly behind them will not be forgotten.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Lucio, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddie Lucio, Jr.
State Senator

