SENT VIA ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDANCE
April 29, 2020

Mr. Michael Costigan, Acting Director
Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
Office of Justice Programs
United States Department of Justice

810 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
C/O: Chandra.artis@usdoj.gov

Dear Acting Director Costigan:

I am writing on behalf of the over 4,400 members of United EMS Workers-AFSCME, Local 4911 AFL-CIO to seek equity and clear inclusion in the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program for EMS professionals employed by a for-profit rescue squad or ambulance provider.

When Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) or Paramedics answer a call, our employer's legal business status is not a factor as to whether we can be disabled or killed in the line of duty. Potential exclusion on the basis of organizational articles of incorporation run contrary to a program that is person-centric and established to provide relief to the survivors of fallen first responders, and disability benefits to those catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

As COVID-19 has pushed New York City's FDNY EMS to their limits, the federal government through FEMA utilized its contract with the for-profit provider, American Medical Response (AMR) Inc., to deploy over 750 EMS professionals and 350 ambulances, which included our members from New Hampshire, to assist the beleaguered city. Whether it's hurricanes, wildfires, mass shootings, and now, a global pandemic, federal, state and local governments rely on the professionalism, skill and bravery of the first responder regardless of who signs their paycheck.

Unfortunately, at times we can be overlooked and undervalued in our vital role. Therefore, we seek clear inclusion to the same benefits as other public safety officers and first responders so we at least know that should tragedy befall us, our survivors and dependents will be afforded same support, relief, and opportunities.

Sincerely,

Jason Brollini
Executive Director, United EMS Workers-AFSCME, Local 4911 AFL-CIO