

Suzanne Barber
Thornton, CO 80602
01/25/2019

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for taking the time to hear about House Bill 19-1080. I'm sorry I was not able to be there in person, I really wanted to be there.

I was a police officer for 15 years, in the Denver Metro area. April 2011, I was injured in the line of duty, during the apprehension of a suspect who had just assaulted another police officer. Due to the injury I sustained, I was forced to medically retire from the one and only job I have ever wanted.

As an officer, I was faced with having to deal with the grief from losing a job I loved, heal from being the victim of a felony assault, causing serious bodily injury; being unable to do the things I loved anymore, because my left arm no longer works properly; unable to be the mother I want to be, with my 4 children; but my family was also faced with serious financial difficulties, due to loss of income.

My family and I are fortunate my husband has good insurance, so our children and I were able to switch to my husband's insurance. However, I went from making approximately \$80,000 a year, to \$24,000 a year in retirement. I was put in a position to have to supplement my income, with my 401A, and draw off my only retirement. The loss of income is extremely difficult to get around.

Passing HB 19-1080 would certainly help civil servants, forced into retirement, due to medical disabilities. Giving civil servants, and their families a chance to enjoy their new normal, by taking away some of their financial burdens.

Again, thank you for taking the time to hear HB 19-1080.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Barber

Fwd: disabled LE Bill

Jana <gaznomo@aol.com>

Thu 3/14/2019 3:59 PM

To: john.cooke.senate@state.co.us <john.cooke.senate@state.co.us>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Scott Stone <srstone35@gmail.com>**Date:** January 28, 2019 at 10:20:38 AM MST**To:** Jana <gaznomo@aol.com>**Subject: Re: disabled LE Bill**

To the committee board and members of congress:

My name is Scott Stone. I am currently serving as a Deputy Sheriff with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. I have been a sworn peace officer in the state of Colorado for approximately 8 years.

If you recognize my name it is because I was invited here last year to honor my fallen friend Micah Flick, who died on February 5, 2018. I was also invited to join you as a survivor of the aforementioned tragedy a few months later. On February 5th, I was struck with a bullet in the left hip, which should have ended my life. Doctors tirelessly operated on me for more than 5 hours. Due to their efforts and God's hand I survived. The following 12 months have been extremely hard. I have fought and struggled, but I have been able to work myself from a wheelchair to walking unassisted.

Although this in itself is remarkable and I'm very proud of my achievement, I still have pain and loss of mobility in my hip and left leg. Doctors have told me that I most likely I will never get this back. To maintain the level I'm at now I have to maintain a level of physical fitness that is difficult to achieve.

With this being said most of the time individuals who are in my situation are released from duty. Most cases, deputies are given or allowed to apply for another position within our county but are not given the same pay, if you are still able to work. Usually, due to the injuries, these positions are less than 2/3rds of what they were once making. They are told, "Thank you for your service, but we no longer have a use for you." I have spoken with officers/deputies from all over the country who are in similar circumstances. This is the normal course of operation for most agencies instead of the rarity. Yes, after suffering a debilitating injury, they are given disability, if the agency has disability benefits, but not all agencies have disability benefits. This still leaves heavy burdens on our injured and their families. Many I have spoken to have lost their homes, some have lost their family, and a few ultimately take their own lives.

In most cases, the financial struggle is what keeps these men and women up at night, the uncertain nature of what tomorrow may bring. Will my agency keep me? How will I find a job? Am I still going to be able to provide for my family? Am I going to be able to keep my house? While worrying about this, you still try to find time to enjoy the little things with family. Nothing is ever the same, but you try to get back to a level of normal and find the new normal for your family. I too have had these thoughts and often worried about this.

For me personally, Sheriff Bill Elder has not allowed this to happen and allowed me to keep my position as a Deputy Sheriff. Although I am limited in what I am allowed to do, I am still a useful member of my agency and can still provide a service to my community, in which I was trained for.

In every circumstance of an injured officer, even when a fellow officer dies, they are forgotten by the majority. Life moves on and most understand that. Some become bitter and develop a hatred for the system they once served. Some lose hope. Some quietly move on and try to make a good life for their families and their selves, knowing their injuries are forgotten. This bill helps officers know that this body of representatives still cares. Even after the smoke clears and life has gone on, The Colorado Representatives still care and want to show their support. These small gestures show, "We the people of Colorado thank you for your sacrifice, and you are not forgotten."

Thank you for time and consideration.

07/03/2018 11:40 AM
The... Sorry for the late email
Shield 616 is supporting us and FOX 31 new will be there

orn

...@gmail.com

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee,

My name is Chris Brown, and I am a medically retired police officer, who proudly served 7 years with the Colorado Springs Police Department. I injured my right hand (dominant) while attempting to arrest a combative suspect on January 20th of 2015. While my injury did not seem serious at the time, I later discovered I had done significant damage to the ligaments in my hand, which causes the bones in my hand to dislocate frequently. The diagnosis was metacarpal instability. My injury became more serious because of poor treatment by the City of Colorado Springs' worker's compensation division. Because of their efforts to avoid providing swift treatment for injuries, I was unable to see a hand doctor for 14 months.

Long story short, after three surgeries to my hand (which included a partial bone fusion), I was unable to fulfil my duties as a Colorado Springs Police Officer and was advised to apply for medical retirement. My surgeon believed that should I encounter another situation like the one I injured my hand in, it could cause more damage which would negatively impact my ability to use my hand for basic activities in the future. I would like to make something very clear, I DID NOT want to medically retire. I loved being a Police Officer and a Narcotics Detective. The amount of time afforded to heal from injuries is minimal; therefore, many officers are forced to retire before exhausting all treatment possibilities.

I was medically retired on January 23, 2018 and provided occupational disability through the FPPA. I am thankful for this benefit; however, most people don't understand the psychological and emotional struggles that a medically retired police officer faces, on top of the physical injury. We mourn the loss. We are not public recognized as servants to our county and communities as the military is. We do not have access to services to help deal with reintegration into civilian life. We are the walking wounded who are cast aside and forgotten.

I was blessed to have an opportunity to join a non-profit organization called SHIELD616 when I retired. I was fortunate to have a background in business prior to becoming an officer. The skills I learned in business, and as an officer, have allowed me to help steer the operational direction of SHIELD616. For those who don't know, our organization rallies communities around their local first responders, in order to provide rifle rated ballistic armor at no cost to the agency or first responder. I love the work I am a part of, but I continue to mourn the loss of my career as a police officer. I was good at my job, and very passionate.

I will end with this, there are many areas of first responder care that need to be reformed. The work that Jana has started is paramount to addressing the many issues. Her proposals are reasonable, and the benefits included in the proposal have been EARNED by the brave men and women who's bodies, minds and spirits have been broken in service to their communities.

I thank you for the opportunity to have my story read. I trust this committee will take this initiative and propel it forward so that the forgotten are honored and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Detective Chris Brown (Retired) Badge 4155

Colorado Springs Police Department

Revised Jana Holder statement

Jana <gaznomo@aol.com>

Thu 3/14/2019 4:24 PM

To: john.cooke.senate@state.co.us <john.cooke.senate@state.co.us>

My name is Jana Holder. My husband is Bill Holder, a disabled police officer injured in the line of duty. I am a former police officer and now spend my time helping to care for my husband who paid a huge price protecting others. My husband has 5 titanium rods in his back and two in his neck from being hit head on by a drunk driver in his patrol car. He can not play ball with our kids, run with them or do other daily activities.

His purpose in life was to serve others and when he lost his career he also lost that purpose. Not only did he loose that but he lost the majority of his income as did I to tend to him.

This bill represents so much more then most can imagine. It represents recognition to those who served and protected us and lost everything doing that.

It helps them on days when they can, to go enjoy a day out with their families at the state parks. It helps them use fishing ramps already in place for them, the small luxuries that they need to keep them going. The other part of this bill helps give them purpose. It allows them to serve in local schools or other areas to work off their parts of the property taxes (this is in place for elderly disabled already, this bill just makes it available to all disabled first responders injured in the line of duty as well)

The standard set in this bill for a first responder to be ruled as an on duty permanent disability, causing the loss of their career, is a high standard. FPPA sends an individual to three separate doctors that have to rule the injury as permanent and caused on duty, as well as being disabling. A fourth doctor then has to agree with those finding before it is voted on by a committee to determine if the injury was caused while on duty and is permanently disabling, causing them to no longer work as a first responder. It is not something easily obtained or a standard that people can slip through. There are only about 750 first responders in Colorado that meet this definition.

The cost this bill is minimal at best. It is a parody bill and is already in place for Vets. Our first responders are vets at war here, for us. We need to honor and respect them in the same way.

Thank you for hearing us today

Jana Holder

Sent from my iPad