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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 358 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY R. MACKENZIE, M. BROWN, CONKLIN, GILLEN, HAMM,  
M. MACKENZIE, NEILSON, ROWE, SIEGEL AND ZIMMERMAN,  
MARCH 14, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS, MARCH 14, 2023

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AN ACT

1 Providing for Keystone First Responder Award.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Keystone  
6 First Responder Award Act.

7 Section 2. Award.

8 (a) Award.--The award shall consist of a plaque and a medal.

9 (b) Presentation.--The Governor or the Governor's designee  
10 shall present a Keystone First Responder Award to each recipient  
11 or surviving next of kin during a public ceremony held on, or as  
12 near as practicable to, September 11 of each year.

13 (c) Committee.--The Keystone First Responder Award shall be  
14 administered by a committee, which shall consist of:

15 (1) The State Fire Commissioner.

16 (2) The Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency

1 Management Agency.

2 (3) The Director of the Bureau of Emergency Medical  
3 Services within the Department of Health.

4 (4) The Secretary of General Services.

5 (5) The Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police.

6 (6) The President of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police  
7 Association.

8 (d) Choice of recipients.--The Governor shall choose, in  
9 consultation with the committee, the recipients of the Keystone  
10 First Responder Award for each year.

11 Section 3. First responder recipient.

12 (a) Recipient.--A Keystone First Responder Award shall be  
13 awarded to:

14 (1) a first responder who suffers a career-ending injury  
15 in the line of duty;

16 (2) the surviving next of kin of a first responder who  
17 is killed or sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty;

18 (3) a Federal first responder or special agent who  
19 suffers a career-ending injury in the line of duty assisting  
20 a State or local law enforcement agency in this Commonwealth;  
21 or

22 (4) the surviving next of kin of a Federal first  
23 responder or special agent who sustains a fatal injury while  
24 assisting a State or local law enforcement agency in this  
25 Commonwealth.

26 (b) Submission of information to committee.--Any individual  
27 who has personal knowledge of a first responder who was killed  
28 or suffered a career-ending injury in the line of duty, or a  
29 Federal first responder or special agent who was killed or  
30 suffered a career-ending injury assisting a State or local law

1 enforcement agency in this Commonwealth, may submit that  
2 information in writing to the committee.

3 (c) Rules and guidelines.--The committee shall establish  
4 rules and guidelines for its operations, for the execution of  
5 this act and for the submission of information under subsection  
6 (b).

7 (d) Eligibility.--In order for a first responder to be  
8 eligible for the award under this act, a first responder must  
9 have been killed or suffered a career-ending injury while  
10 actively responding to an emergency. The committee shall  
11 determine whether or not a submission under subsection (b) is  
12 eligible for consideration.

13 (e) Construction.--Nothing in this act shall be construed to  
14 have any bearing on:

15 (1) the act of June 2, 1915 (P.L.736, No.338), known as  
16 the Workers' Compensation Act;

17 (2) the act of June 28, 1935 (P.L.477, No.193), referred  
18 to as the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law;

19 (3) the act of June 24, 1976 (P.L.424, No.101), referred  
20 to as the Emergency and Law Enforcement Personnel Death  
21 Benefits Act; or

22 (4) any other determination of benefits.

23 (f) Purpose of award.--The Keystone First Responder Award  
24 shall only be for recognition purposes.

25 (g) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following  
26 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this  
27 subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

28 "First responder." Any of the following:

29 (1) A current or former member of an emergency medical  
30 services agency, fire company or rescue company.

1           (2) A peace officer.

2           (3) A 911 dispatcher.

3           (4) A coroner or medical examiner who responds in an  
4 official capacity to an emergency.

5           (5) A corrections officer.

6        "Peace officer." As defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 501 (relating to  
7 definitions).

8 Section 4. Effective date.

9        This act shall take effect in 60 days.