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SENATE RUSSELL BUILDING
SUITE 204
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
202.224.2644

MONTANA TOLL FREE NUMBER
1-866-554-4403

INTERNET
<http://senator.jontester.gov/contact>

July 16, 2007

Steve Larson
Montana State Fire Chiefs Association
300 Neill Ave
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Steve:

Thank you for taking the time to forward me the letter the Montana State Fire Chiefs Association sent to President Bush regarding the Department of Justice's (DOJ) administration of the Public Safety Officers Benefit (PSOB) program.

I think it was important for Congress to pass legislation allowing the families of our nation's brave firefighters, emergency medical rescuers, and law enforcement officers who suffer fatal heart attacks or strokes to qualify for federal survivor benefits. Heart attack and cardiac related deaths account for almost half of all firefighter fatalities -- between 45-50 deaths -- and an average of 13 police officer deaths each year. I find it disturbing that three years after the Hometown Heroes legislation was passed more than 80% of claims have not been processed.

Public safety officers are among our most brave and dedicated public servants. As this issue comes before the Senate, please be assured that I will keep your views in mind.

I appreciate the time that you have taken to be involved and informed about this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me again if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator

BOZEMAN
(406) 586-4450

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(406) 723-3277

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(406) 365-2391

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