Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Pennsylvania State Lodge is pleased to inform you that on April 29, 2020, Governor Thomas Wolf signed House Bill 1869, now Act 17 of 2020 into law. Both the House and Senate had passed this important legislation unanimously.

Over the last several weeks, the State Lodge worked tirelessly to convince the General Assembly and the Governor that in this time of uncertainty, law enforcement must be assured that there would be no financial risk to officers who, while performing their jobs, are subject to the hazard that is COVID-19. While officers may be entitled to Heart and Lung benefits and workers compensation benefits, the fact is that even if an officer was unfortunate enough to have the conditions outlined in Act 17 and was unable to work, there was no assurance that the officer would be paid their lost salary without a challenge from their employer or its workers compensation insurer. With the passage of Act 17, that concern is gone.

Act 17 mandates that any law enforcement officer covered under the Heart and Lung Act who: (1) contracts COVID-19, (2) is diagnosed with COVID-19, or is subject to quarantine resulting from exposure to COVID-19, and by reason thereof is temporarily incapacitated from work, “SHALL” be compensated in accordance with the Heart & Lung Act for a period of up to 60 days per incident. This guarantees officers their full salaries during that time period without the use of any paid time off, such as sick days.

Act 17 benefits should provide officers with the coverage they will need to address most COVID-19 issues. However, for officers impacted with COVID-19 issues that are serious in nature and expected to exceed 60 days of temporary incapacitation, applications for Heart & Lung Act benefits and Workers Compensation benefits should also be filed along with the request for Act 17 benefits and aggressively pursued.

Like the Heart and Lung Act, there is no procedure outlined in Act 17 detailing how an officer applies for salary continuation. The State Lodge suggests officers follow a procedure similar to the process used by the officer’s agency to apply for Heart and Lung benefits, or use the form included with this letter.

Fraternally,

Les Neri, President
PA State Lodge