



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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PATRICK YOES
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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The Honorable Michael B. Quigley
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brian K. Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Quigley and Fitzpatrick,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 263, the “Big Cat Public Safety Act.”

There is an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 big cats that are owned as pets or maintained in ill-equipped roadside zoos and traveling exhibits in the United States. Since 1990, there have been over 770 dangerous incidents involving big cats—tigers, lions, cougars, and others. Among the most tragic instances related to big cats, there are the 5 children and 20 adults that have been killed. In addition, there have been hundreds of people who have been mauled by big cats.

Having these exotic animals in people’s homes and backyards pose a safety risk to the public as well as law enforcement officers who must come face-to-face with these dangerous cats when they escape or attack humans. In October 2011, sheriff deputies arrived at a notorious animal preserve in Zanesville, Ohio, and found wild animals—Bengal tigers, lions, bears and other ferocious animals—wandering away from their captivity. Some of these vicious animals were headed for the highway. Fearing that the animals would scatter and possibly have tragic encounters with the public, the deputies began dispatching the wildlife with their pistols. Muskingum County Sheriff Matt Lutz was quoted, saying that “there were some very close calls” and at times it was “almost hand-to-hand” combat. There were 49 animals put down—18 Bengal tigers, 17 lions, six black bears, a pair of grizzlies, three mountain lions, two wolves and a baboon—to ensure there was no attacks on the public.

This legislation would ensure that big cats only live in secure facilities that can properly provide for them and do not diminish public safety. Law enforcement officers around the country have enough on their hands—especially given the recent COVID-19 pandemic. They go through extensive training, but not for this. They shouldn’t have to be confronted with dangerous big cats kept in unsafe and abusive circumstances as domestic pets.

On behalf of the more than 356,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I am proud to offer our support for this legislation. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington office.

Sincerely,

Patrick Yoes
National President