

March 4, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tricia Teichler. My husband, Derek Teichler, is a veteran police officer of 27 years and I have been with him throughout his entire career and before. He has always been active and invested in the community. We served together in the Fire Department as volunteers before he became a police officer. He enjoyed doing things outside and in the yard. March of 2020 changed all of that!

Everyone was sent home and told to remain home under a shut-down around March 13th due to COVID-19. However, there remained critical staffing needs such as First Responders who still needed to report. At that time all we knew was that COVID-19 was extremely contagious, little known about it or how to treat it, and the scariest was people were dying from it! But in light of that, many still had to put their lives on the line to serve the community for essential needs.

My husband, along with many others, answered the calls! Unfortunately for him, it nearly cost him his life!!!

He started to develop symptoms around March 19th-20th and from there the symptoms continued to get worse. He contacted his primary doctor, but at that time you needed a doctor's order to get tested and you had to meet specific criteria to test. On March 25th my husband's doctor had him go to Holy Cross Hospital in Germantown due to the decline in his condition and his symptoms getting worse. They admitted him to meet the criteria for testing and discharged him the next evening. On Friday, March 26th he was contacted to inform him he was COVID +. With his breathing issues, chest discomfort and other symptoms, his doctor told him to return to Holy Cross. The ER doctor discharged him to return home with no real testing or treatment and a diagnosis of asthma!

Over the next several days he continued to worsen. He was at a point that he could not even talk because he could not really breathe and talk at the same time. This was while on a nebulizer and prednisone. His doctor sent him to the hospital again and we decided to go to Shady Grove Hospital.

Immediately upon being seen in the ER at SGAH, they did a CT scan and sent him directly to the Intensive Care Unit! He was at the threshold for being placed on a ventilator and I could not even be there with him. Thankfully I had a good friend that was a nurse there that could check in on him, as many others going through this did not have. She called me to prepare me for the possibility of him being placed on a vent. When she was concerned, I knew it was bad! He could not communicate with me as he could not talk, and he struggled with every breath. Then I had to sit our 2 sons, my mother-in-law that lives with us, and my sister-in-law, down to break the news to them. At this time all you heard in the news was the death toll. What does

this mean for my husband, father of my children, and my best friend? It was an extremely scary time!

Thankfully his life was spared! We are so thankful to have him here with us today! However, it did come at a cost! It has been a long road and he will never be the same as he was before COVID-19.

So initially we thought he would eventually recover and be able to return to life as it was before. When he came home, he was still very much in recovery and still got short of breath just walking in the house. He had doctors to continually follow up with from a pulmonologist, infectious disease doctor, a cardiologist, hematologist, and his primary. He had trouble breathing, congestion, high blood pressure, enlarged heart, joint pain, chest pain with exertion, diminished oxygen levels, malaise, lethargy, coughing fits, light headedness, migraines and headaches, loss of appetite, etc. Many of these lasted for months to a year after, but many he still has to this day. The concern is the ongoing health issues he will experience for the rest of his life.

When he came home, he was frustrated and angry at everything. He was so active before and was unable to do any of the things he could do before. He was the bread winner and worked as much as he could to provide for his family. He no longer was able to do that, which greatly affected us financially. He was home and unable to work for about 10 months. He pushed to return to work on a light duty status. Although he eventually was given the clearance to return, he still struggled to do so. He was angry about not being able to be on the road and doing the job he did before. He struggled because working a 10-hour day, even in an "in office" role, was exhausting. He struggled not being able to support and back up his fellow officers. He struggled with the limitations he was having to come to terms with!

It will be 4 years ago this month that COVID-19 changed our lives forever. At the time Derek contracted COVID-19 he was working. If he had been injured in any other way, it would be workers comp. If he contracted another disease from someone on a call, he would be covered. So why when you have someone who sacrificed themselves to continue to answer the call during a global pandemic, would they not be covered when they have lifelong affects and consequences from their selfless service?

That is why I am here to support and fight for SB0431 Long COVID Home of the Brave Act 2024! We need to support the people and their families that will be suffering the consequences for a lifetime!

Thank you,

Tricia Teichler