

Good morning! I am Derek Teichler and am a 27 year veteran police officer with the Montgomery County Police Department here in MD. The beginning of 2020 was filled with uncertainty and fear. The members of my department as well as other agencies across the state and country were tasked with continuing to answer calls for service regardless of the still largely unknown COVID. What was COVID, how did you contract it, what were the symptoms, is it like the flu, but most importantly can it be treated? The department had officers meet at our academy on 3/16/2020 to fit test for the N95 mask, quite possibly and unintentionally creating the perfect super spreader event for the department. It is during this event that I believe I became infected with COVID.

On March 19, 2020, I became symptomatic with COVID symptoms to include trouble breathing, congestion, loss of smell/taste and coughing fits where I would almost blackout.

My primary care doctor advised me to get tested at Holy Cross hospital Germantown on March 25, 2020, due to the increased severity of my symptoms. At that time, I was admitted to “meet the criteria” for testing. I was

tested and released the next day on March 26,2020. On March 27 I was notified that I was positive for COVID. Due to a worsening of my breathing, I was advised to return to HCHG by my primary care doctor. I was seen in the ER and was discharged with a diagnosis of "asthma". How could it be asthma if I already tested positive for COVID? My condition continued to worsen and was advised to go to Shady Grove Hospital on April 1, 2020 were within the hour I was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. This is an experience I don't wish on anybody! After being released from the ICU and sent home, it has and continues be a long road to recovery. The extreme weakness to where walking across the room without stopping was impossible and needing to stop 3 times while climbing a flight of stairs due to severe breathing difficulties was the norm for months after leaving the hospital. I also still tested positive for COVID for 2 months after being discharged.

It has been 3+ years and I still have lasting effects from COVID. I am under the care of a Cardiologist, Pulmonologist, and primary care doctor. The most limiting effects from having COVID has been my

diminished lung capacity and ability to process oxygen and high blood pressure. These limitations have prevented me from returning to full duty as a police officer assigned to a patrol shift, working overtime, part-time, or performing everyday tasks most people take for granted. Additionally, there is the brain fog, joint pain, and anger because you are no longer the man you once were and having a hard time coming to terms with this reality. My family unfortunately was the recipient of this anger. This bill is important as it would give all essential personnel suffering from long COVID much needed relief both financially and emotionally.