

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1604**

COMMITTEES:  
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ON SOCIAL SECURITY  
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BUDGET  
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

February 9, 2026

President Donlad J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

I recommend you award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Chief Richard LaMunyon of Wichita, Kansas for his visionary leadership and extraordinary contributions to individuals with intellectual disabilities through the founding of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. Through Chief LaMunyon's leadership, millions of Special Olympics athletes around the world have gained not only critical financial support, but also dignity, inclusion, and a powerful bond with law enforcement officers who proudly stand beside them. Over the past four decades, Chief LaMunyon's vision has transformed a local act of compassion into the largest grassroots movement supporting Special Olympics worldwide.

Chief LaMunyon devoted his life to public service and community leadership. As Chief of the Wichita Police Department, he exemplified the highest ideals of law enforcement service, integrity, and compassion, while seeking new ways to strengthen trust between officers and the communities they serve.

In 1979, Chief LaMunyon attended the Special Olympics Kansas State Summer Games, where he witnessed firsthand the profound connection between law enforcement officers and athletes. While presenting a medal to a young athlete, he was deeply moved by her tears of joy and excitement, an experience that became the spark for his lifelong commitment to the Special Olympics mission. At the time, many athletes and their families bore the financial burden of participation, and Chief LaMunyon resolved to ensure that no athlete would be prevented from competing due to cost.

In June 1981, Chief LaMunyon and officers from the Wichita Police Department launched the first "Flame of Hope" run from Wichita City Hall to South High School. What began as a modest local effort quickly gained momentum. After witnessing the overwhelming enthusiasm of athletes and the strong show of support from hundreds of officers at the Kansas Summer Games, Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver gave her official blessing to expand the effort nationally, giving rise to what is now known as the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Since its founding, the Law Enforcement Torch Run has grown from a single run in Wichita into a global movement spanning all 50 states, every province in Canada, and more than 25 countries.

Today, over 150,000 law enforcement officers participate annually, carrying the “Flame of Hope” and raising funds to support athletes with intellectual disabilities. Since 1981, the movement has raised more than \$1.1 billion in support of the Special Olympics, making it the organization’s largest grassroots fundraising initiative.

Chief Richard LaMunyon defines what it means to be an American public servant. His compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to inclusion have left an enduring global legacy. I can think of no one more deserving of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Estes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Estes  
Member of Congress