

CS/CS/HB 573

2020

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to peer support for first responders;
3 creating s. 111.09, F.S.; providing definitions;
4 prohibiting certain persons who participate in peer
5 support communication with a first responder from
6 testifying or divulging specified information under
7 certain circumstances; providing exceptions;
8 prohibiting liability and a cause of action under
9 certain circumstances; providing construction;
10 providing an effective date.

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12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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14 Section 1. Section 111.09, Florida Statutes, is created to
15 read:

16 111.09 Peer support for first responders.—

17 (1) For purposes of this section, the term:

18 (a) "First responder" has the same meaning as provided in
19 s. 112.1815 and includes public safety communications officers,
20 dispatchers, and 911 or other phone system operators whose job
21 duties include providing support or services to first
22 responders.

23 (b) "First responder peer" means a person who:

24 1. Is not a health care practitioner as defined in s.

25 456.001.

26 2. Has experience working as or with a first responder
27 regarding any physical or emotional conditions or issues
28 associated with the first responder's employment.

29 3. Has been designated by the first responder's employing
30 agency to provide peer support as provided in this section and
31 has received training for this purpose.

32 (c) "Peer support" means the provision of physical, moral,
33 or emotional support to a first responder by a first responder
34 peer for the purpose of addressing physical or emotional
35 conditions or other issues associated with being a first
36 responder.

37 (d) "Peer support communication" means electronic, oral,
38 or written communication, made with a mutual expectation of
39 confidentiality while a first responder peer is providing peer
40 support in his or her official capacity.

41 (2) A first responder peer may not divulge information
42 from or testify about a peer support communication in a civil,
43 criminal, administrative, or disciplinary proceeding, unless:

44 (a) The first responder peer is a defendant in a civil,
45 criminal, administrative, or disciplinary proceeding arising
46 from a complaint filed by the first responder who was a party to
47 the peer support communication, in which case such information
48 may be divulged but is limited to the scope of the proceeding;

49 (b) The first responder who was a party to the peer
50 support communication agrees, in writing, to allow the first

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51 responder peer to testify about or divulge information related
52 to the peer support communications;

53 (c) Based on the peer support communications, the first
54 responder peer suspects that the first responder who was a party
55 to the peer support communications has committed a criminal act
56 or intends to commit a criminal act. There is no liability on
57 the part of, and no cause of action of any nature may arise
58 against, the first responder peer for disclosing information
59 under this paragraph; or

60 (d) There are articulable facts or circumstances that
61 would lead a reasonable, prudent person to fear for the safety
62 of the first responder who was a party to the peer support
63 communication, another person, or society, and the first
64 responder peer communicates the information only to a potential
65 victim and law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.
66 There is no liability on the part of, and no cause of action of
67 any nature may arise against, the first responder peer for
68 disclosing information under this paragraph.

69 (3) This section does not limit the disclosure, discovery,
70 or admissibility of information, testimony, or evidence that is
71 obtained by a first responder peer from a source other than a
72 first responder through a peer support communication.

73 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.