

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 472

To require the Attorney General to propose a program for making treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder available to public safety officers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 24, 2023

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio (for himself, Ms. ROSS, Ms. BROWN, and Mr. TURNER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To require the Attorney General to propose a program for making treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder available to public safety officers, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Fighting Post-Trau-
5 matic Stress Disorder Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Public safety officers serve their commu-
2 nities with bravery and distinction in order to keep
3 their communities safe.

4 (2) Public safety officers, including police offi-
5 cers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians,
6 and 911 dispatchers, are on the front lines of deal-
7 ing with situations that are stressful, graphic,
8 harrowing, and life threatening.

9 (3) The work of public safety officers puts them
10 at risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder
11 and acute stress disorder.

12 (4) It is estimated that 30 percent of public
13 safety officers develop behavioral health conditions
14 at some point in their lifetimes, including depression
15 and post-traumatic stress disorder, in comparison to
16 20 percent of the general population that develops
17 such conditions.

18 (5) Victims of post-traumatic stress disorder
19 and acute stress disorder are at a higher risk of
20 dying by suicide.

21 (6) Firefighters have been reported to have
22 higher suicide attempt and ideation rates than the
23 general population.

24 (7) It is estimated that between 125 and 300
25 police officers die by suicide every year.

1 (8) In 2019, pursuant to section 2(b) of the
2 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act
3 of 2017 (Public Law 115–113; 131 Stat. 2276), the
4 Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing
5 Services of the Department of Justice developed
6 a report (referred to in this section as the
7 “LEMHWA report”) that expressed that many law
8 enforcement agencies do not have the capacity or
9 local access to the mental health professionals necessary
10 for treating their law enforcement officers.

11 (9) The LEMHWA report recommended methods
12 for establishing remote access or regional mental
13 health check programs at the State or Federal level.

14 (10) Individual police and fire departments generally
15 do not have the resources to employ full-time
16 mental health experts who are able to treat public
17 safety officers with state-of-the-art techniques for
18 the purpose of treating job-related post-traumatic
19 stress disorder and acute stress disorder.

20 **SEC. 3. PROGRAMMING FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DIS-**
21 **ORDER.**

22 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (1) PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER.—The term “public
24 safety officer”—

1 (A) has the meaning given the term in sec-
2 tion 1204 of the Omnibus Crime Control and
3 Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10284);
4 and

5 (B) includes Tribal public safety officers.

6 (2) PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR.—
7 The term “public safety telecommunicator” means
8 an individual who—

9 (A) operates telephone, radio, or other
10 communication systems to receive and commu-
11 nicate requests for emergency assistance at 911
12 public safety answering points and emergency
13 operations centers;

14 (B) takes information from the public and
15 other sources relating to crimes, threats, dis-
16 turbances, acts of terrorism, fires, medical
17 emergencies, and other public safety matters;
18 and

19 (C) coordinates and provides information
20 to law enforcement and emergency response
21 personnel.

22 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 150 days after the date
23 of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, acting
24 through the Director of the Office of Community Oriented
25 Policing Services of the Department of Justice, shall sub-

1 mit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and
2 the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Rep-
3 resentatives a report on—

4 (1) not fewer than 1 proposed program, if the
5 Attorney General determines it appropriate and fea-
6 sible to do so, to be administered by the Department
7 of Justice for making state-of-the-art treatments or
8 preventative care available to public safety officers
9 and public safety telecommunicators with regard to
10 job-related post-traumatic stress disorder or acute
11 stress disorder by providing public safety officers
12 and public safety telecommunicators access to evi-
13 dence-based trauma-informed care, peer support,
14 counselor services, and family supports for the pur-
15 pose of treating or preventing post-traumatic stress
16 disorder or acute stress disorder;

17 (2) a draft of any necessary grant conditions
18 required to ensure that confidentiality is afforded to
19 public safety officers on account of seeking the care
20 or services described in paragraph (1) under the pro-
21 posed program;

22 (3) how each proposed program described in
23 paragraph (1) could be most efficiently administered
24 throughout the United States at the State, Tribal,

1 territorial, and local levels, taking into account in-
2 person and telehealth capabilities;

3 (4) a draft of legislative language necessary to
4 authorize each proposed program described in para-
5 graph (1); and

6 (5) an estimate of the amount of annual appro-
7 priations necessary for administering each proposed
8 program described in paragraph (1).

9 (c) DEVELOPMENT.—In developing the report re-
10 quired under subsection (b), the Attorney General shall
11 consult relevant stakeholders, including—

12 (1) Federal, State, Tribal, territorial, and local
13 agencies employing public safety officers and public
14 safety telecommunicators; and

15 (2) non-governmental organizations, inter-
16 national organizations, academies, or other entities,
17 including organizations that support the interests of
18 public safety officers and public safety telecommu-
19 nicators and the interests of family members of pub-
20 lic safety officers and public safety telecommunica-
21 tors.

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