

Frank LaRose
State Senator
27th District



Ohio Senate

Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, Room 221
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-4823

Sponsor Testimony on Senate Bill 118
Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee
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Chairman Hottinger, Vice Chair Hackett, members of the Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 118. This legislation will ensure that Ohio's brave first responders get the coverage they deserve to aid in their recovery arising from PTSD. This legislation will exempt peace officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel in Ohio from the requirement that claimants diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder must have suffered an accompanying physical injury in order to apply for compensation with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation.

Currently, R.C. Sec. 4123.01(C)(1) requires that a claimant diagnosed with a psychiatric condition must have sustained a physical injury precipitating their mental condition to be eligible for workers' compensation. However, experts agree that no scientific evidence exists proving a person has to have a physical injury to be diagnosed with a psychiatric condition. This legislation would assure that first responders diagnosed with PTSD arising from their employment are eligible for covered treatment and compensation, regardless of physical injury.

Ohio's hard-working and dedicated first responders are often subject to scenes of violence, high stress and hazardous situations that can cause lasting psychiatric damage, even in instances where a physical injury was not sustained. This legislation will provide avenues of relief for peace officers and firefighters who have valiantly served the public and suffer from PTSD originating from the performance of their duties. This commonsense change gives our brave men and women time to recover and help them begin the journey back to work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.