



CITY OF SIDNEY

Department of Fire & Emergency Services

Administration Division

Chad A. Hollinger; Fire Chief

April 4, 2022

Chairman Hilyar
Vice Chair Grendell
Ranking Member Golonski
Re: Ohio House Bill 545

House Civil Justice Committee,

I am writing to express my full support for H.B. 545 which would allow privileged communication and provide confidentiality to Peer Supporters and First Responders. This legislation provides a mechanism for First Responders to engage a trained Peer Supporter to take the first steps in preventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

In recent years, we have witnessed an alarming increase in suicide amongst the First Responder community. As you are aware, the job of a First Responder takes a toll on the physical and mental health of our personnel. We have made great strides in caring for their physical health and it is now time that we take action to remove barriers and stigmas surrounding mental wellness. The daily stressors of our profession can be addressed and if care is sought by a First Responder, it should not be detrimental to their careers. Many First Responders are reluctant to engage mental health treatment out of fear for the stigmas and repercussions that are associated with the symptoms and disorders that are caused by the very jobs we require them to perform.

I humbly request that you join me in supporting H.B. 545 and extend to our First Responders the protections they need to continue to serve and protect our communities with sound physical and mental health.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "CHAD A. HOLLINGER".

Chad A. Hollinger
Fire Chief