



*Hamilton County Association of Chiefs of Police*  
*President*  
*Chief John Crowell*  
*Montgomery Police Department*  
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February 22, 2022

Rep. Cindy Abrams  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street, 14th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: House Bill 545

Dear Representative Abrams:

The Hamilton County Police Chiefs Association is writing to express our support for House Bill 545 introduced by you a few weeks ago.

Due to the significant stigma around mental health, many first responders delay or avoid seeking treatment. By the time a first responder shows up at a clinician's office, they may have been suffering the symptoms of cumulative stress or PTSD for many years. Peer Support is a way to encourage people to seek help early before the stress takes a significant toll on a person. The culture of denial prevents law enforcement from understanding that these reactions, feelings, and emotions are natural to abnormal events. As a result, often times they do not seek help before they lose their families, their careers or even their life.

Peer Support Programs give first responders the ability to talk to someone who understands the job and the stress related to doing the job. Trusted Peers can help another individual to connect with resources which can save lives, careers, marriages and relationships. This legislation gives peer teams protection so they can offer help to fellow first responders before there are negative consequences.

Sincerely,

Chief John Crowell  
President  
Hamilton County Association of Chiefs of Police