

Nov. 12, 2022

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee – thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 545.

I have been an attorney for over 50 years, an Ohio volunteer Firefighter I / EMT– Basic for over 40 years, served on Southwest Ohio Critical Incident Stress Management Team for over 15 years, and now serve on the Tri-State Peer Support Team Board (as their pro bono Legal Counsel), and coordinate a Pet Therapy Support Team for stress relief visits and critical incident response for emergency responders: 14 dogs and one large rabbit.

<http://www.hamiltoncountyfirechiefs.com/pet-therapy-support-team.html> .

I had the honor of working with the late Ohio Senator Bob Schuler (R-Sycamore Township) and his staff on drafting the 2005 Ohio law providing testimonial privilege for members of Critical Incident Stress Management Team members.



Robert Schuler was a Republican politician who formerly served in the Ohio General Assembly. Schuler first entered politics in the late 1970s as a member of the Deer Park City Council and also spent four years as a Sycamore Township trustee from 1988 to 1992. [Wikipedia](#)

[Born:](#) June 15, 1943, [Cincinnati, OH](#)

[Died:](#) June 19, 2009, [Cincinnati, OH](#)

[Party:](#) [Ohio Republican Party](#)

126<sup>th</sup> General Assembly – Senate Sub Bill No. 19 (2005):

[http://archives.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=126\\_SB\\_19](http://archives.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=126_SB_19)

## AN ACT

**To amend sections 2317.02 and 4117.14 of the Revised Code to make the testimonial privilege against disclosure of certain communications applicable to critical incident stress management (CISM) team members, to create a testimonial privilege between employee-assistance program personnel and program clients, and to reenact the provision of law designating the Controlling Board as the legislative body authorized to reject recommendations of a fact-finding panel.**

Now that Peer Support is becoming very common in Ohio and throughout the nation for fire, EMS and law enforcement, it is time to update the Ohio revised code. Similar to Ohio law that provides a testimonial privilege when clients consult with me as their attorney, emergency responders need the comfort of knowing they may openly discuss concerns with their Peer Supporter.

I would be most happy to provide testimony or other support for HB 545.

Sincerely,

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