

SB-42

Recognizing the significant mental health challenges faced by first responders, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and the need to provide adequate support and resources to address these challenges.

IN THE SENATE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION BOYS NATION

Mr. Sanner of Kansas introduced the following bill;

A BILL

Recognizing the significant mental health challenges faced by first responders, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and the need to provide adequate support and resources to address these challenges.

Be it enacted by The American Legion Boys Nation Senate assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Mental Awareness Act".

SECTION 2: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BRANCH

2.1. The First Responder Mental Health Services Branch (FRMHSB) shall be established within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to address the mental health needs of first responders.

2.2. The FRMHSB shall focus primarily on providing mental health services related to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), suicidal thoughts and tendencies, depression, domestic violence risk factors, and substance abuse.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

3.1. For the purposes of this bill, "first responders" shall include law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and other high-risk frontline professionals.

3.2. High-Risk frontline professions shall be determined through the partnerships established between the FRMHSB and other groups and organizations.

SECTION 4: FUNDING AND RESOURCES

4.1. The FRMHSB shall be funded by the federal government through allocations provided within the federal budget.

4.2. The FRMHSB shall be established as a branch of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and funding shall be requested within the annual funding request of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

4.3. The FRMHSB may also seek additional funding through grants, donations, and partnerships with relevant organizations.

SECTION 5: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BRANCH

5.1. The FRMHSB shall develop and implement comprehensive mental health programs specifically designed for first responders, incorporating evidence-based practices and specialized treatment approaches.

5.2. The FRMHSB shall collaborate with existing mental health organizations, academic institutions, and relevant federal agencies to ensure the effective provision of mental health services.

5.3. The FRMHSB shall establish protocols for early identification, assessment, and intervention of mental health issues among first responders.

5.4. The FRMHSB shall conduct research and collect data on the prevalence and impact of mental health issues within the first responder community, ensuring that the programs and services provided are evidence-based and tailored to their needs.

5.5. The FRMHSB shall promote mental health awareness and education among first responders, their families, and the public.

SECTION 6: COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING PROGRAMS

6.1. The FRMHSB shall collaborate with existing mental health programs and initiatives that serve first responders, leveraging their expertise and resources.

6.2. The FRMHSB shall reference the framework established by preexisting groups and organizations, currently in operation, to serve as a guide for the development and implementation of its programs and services.

SECTION 7: REPORTING AND EVALUATION

7.1. The FRMHSB shall submit annual reports to Congress, providing an overview of its operations, outcomes, and financial allocations.

7.2. The FRMHSB shall undergo regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness of its programs and identify areas for improvement.