Legislation Details (With Text)

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Enactment date:	5/29/2024	**Enactment #:**	355
Effective date:	5/29/2024		
Title:	NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh makes known its support for Pennsylvania House Bill No. 1632 of 2023 and encourages its swift adoption by the Pennsylvania General Assembly; and, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council encourages the Allegheny Delegation of the Pennsylvania State Senate to support this vital legislation, as well as any companion legislation to it that may be introduced.		
Sponsors:	Erika Strassburger, All Members		
Indexes:	PROCLAMATION - MRS. STRASSBURGER		
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/29/2024	1	City Council	Adopted	Pass

WHEREAS, Post-Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) consists of the same set of symptoms as post-traumatic stress disorder characterized by exposure to a traumatic event as identified by the American Psychiatric Association and documented in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition; and,

WHEREAS, a 2023 study published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) titled "An analysis of suicides among first responders ─ Findings from the National Violent Death Reporting System, 2015-2017" found that first responders, including law enforcement officers (LEOs), firefighters, emergency medical services (EMS) clinicians, and public safety telecommunicators, face unique occupational stressors and may be at elevated risk for suicide; and,

WHEREAS, that same study found the following: first responders accounted for 1% of all suicides from 2015-2017 and when compared to the general public some common risk factors for suicide such as history of suicidal thoughts, previous suicide attempt, alcohol/substance abuse problem were significantly lower among first responders; and,

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania House Bill No. 1632 of 2023 (H.B. 1632) would amend the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Law to allow for post-traumatic stress injury as the result of a "qualifying traumatic event" to be a compensable injury for first responders; and,

WHEREAS, as the law currently stands, the stipulation that one must suffer a trauma-inducing experience under an "abnormal working condition" to claim workers' compensation benefits creates a substantial hurdle

that prevents countless first responders from receiving necessary and appropriate psychiatric care because their service requires frequent exposure to such trauma-inducing experiences; and,

WHEREAS, H.B. 1632 would eliminate a situation in which first responders are forced to choose between seeking quality treatment or forgoing their wages and suffering financial consequences just for seeking medical care; and,

WHEREAS, according to the 2018 study conducted by the Ruderman Family Foundation, "when compared to members of the civilian population, [first responders] experience heightened levels of depression, [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder], suicidal thoughts, and more" because their exposure to trauma is an, unfortunately, all too common part of the course of their service; and,

WHEREAS, because of this, first responders are more likely to die by suicide than they are to die as part of their service in the line of duty, but shame, stigma, and other barriers can keep first responders from pursuing the mental health services that they need, and these first responders should be encouraged to do so and supported so that they can receive necessary and possibly life-saving treatment; and,

WHEREAS, barriers to mental health treatment for first responders should be removed, and H.B. 1632 is a critical first step.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh makes known its support for Pennsylvania House Bill No. 1632 of 2023 and encourages its swift adoption by the Pennsylvania General Assembly; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council encourages the Allegheny Delegation of the Pennsylvania State Senate to support this vital legislation, as well as any companion legislation to it that may be introduced.

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