

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTING THE VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL



TERESA ANN CRISMAN
VICE CHAIRMAN
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17 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 25, 2022

Chair: Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass

Vice Chair: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Reference: House Bill 581 Public Safety - Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities - Peer Support Programs

Chairman Pendergrass and Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the 365 member corporations that make up the Maryland State Firemen's Association. My name is Teresa Ann Crisman and I am one of the Vice Chairs to the MSFA Legislative Committee the voice for our members.

I am very grateful today to bring you an update as to what the MSFA is working toward for peer support of our members that are operational, administrative and Auxiliary members. We with support of our partners have created programs and support means towards peer support. We are actively working as a group and including our members who are our professionals who help support our many department's needs. We feel that we all need to come together and support our Fire/EMS family.

Under director of 1st Vice President Kurtz a task force was created to bring together all of the programs that are currently being addressed by the various county's and their association peer support teams. We met to and in structure are currently working towards a global program and House Bill 581 helps support our program's needs. It will help bring together focused efforts and allow our members to seek professional and peer active support. We know that by having these in place our members can bring not only themselves but also their family including children in the program. We feel that our programs will help broaden a members feeling of finding the support they seek.

This past week I learned of a program in Tennessee that I could see our name replace theirs and it mirrored the needs and I can look to other states doing the very same. Stress in the Fire/EMS is very prevalent anywhere in this county and by supporting HB581 it will help our state do that very thing allow our members the ability to turn to a friend and confidant knowing what they are going through help find the dark end of a tunnel turn to the light they need.

In closing thank you for supporting this very important bill by allowing us to address this very important topic. HB 581 is a welcome level of support.

Thank you,

Teresa Ann