

Senator Jeff Waldstreicher Testimony - SB 527 - Pe

Uploaded by: Jeff Waldstreicher

Position: FAV

SENATOR JEFF WALDSTREICHER
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

—
Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee

—
Joint Committee on Federal Relations



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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
Senate Bill 527 – Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities – Peer Support Programs

March 1, 2023

Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Last session, we passed legislation establishing free, confidential peer support programs for our first responders. Under that bill, the Behavioral Health Administration—in consultation with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems and the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland—was tasked with developing a report on best practices and professional standards for peer support programs.

As the stakeholders met to develop this report, a concern was raised about the wording of last year’s bill. Specifically, last year’s legislation makes reference to “peer counseling” and “peer counselors.” We meant counselor in the colloquial sense, with a small “c.” In Maryland, however, “counselor” has a specific legal definition, and is practiced by specific licensed professions. In essence, the law is being interpreted as if it had a capital “C.” Senate Bill 527 is a technical fix to this issue, clearing things by altering the term “peer support counseling program” to instead be “peer support program.”

Our first responders risk their lives for Maryland families every day. These heroes deserve quality, no-cost, evidenced-based mental health services to cope with the traumatic experiences they regularly encounter in the line of duty. I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 527.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Waldstreicher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Jeff Waldstreicher

SB0527.pdf

Uploaded by: Jonathan Dayton

Position: FAV



Allegany Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire Rescue Association
P.O. Box 935 Frostburg, MD 21532
agcvfra.net

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Chair Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
February 28, 2023

Dear Committee,

The Allegany Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire Rescue Association is writing you today to **fully support** SB0527 Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities – Peer Support Programs. The mental health and well-being of our volunteer fire and rescue personnel are something that we take seriously. We fully agree that peer support should be evidence-based in nature. We also fully agree that best practice guidelines need to be established.

As this proposed legislation continues through the committee, we offer our full support and will provide additional testimony if the occasion arises.

Sincerely,

Austin Christner, President

Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Vice President, Public Information Officer, and Legislative Committee Chairperson

The mission of the Allegany and Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association is to serve, promote, advocate and represent the interests of the volunteer fire, rescue, and emergency medical services in Allegany and Garrett Counties.

SB527 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTING THE VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMS PERSONNEL OF MARYLAND.



Robert P. Phillips

Chair

Legislative Committee

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SB 527: Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities – Peer Support Programs

My name is Robert Phillips and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA)

I wish to present testimony in favor of Senate Bill 527: Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities – Peer Support Programs

The MSFA is in favor of and support this bill. This bill asks for a change in the definition of "Peer support counseling program" to "Peer support program" and defining it as an evidence-based program provided by a fire, rescue, or emergency medical services entity or the International Association of Firefighters that provides EVIDENCE-BASED SUPPORT from a peer support specialist to a member of a fire, rescue, or emergency medical services entity. This will allow additional qualified people to be available to assist our members who may need help, with out changing the quality of assistance or the intent of the original language.

I thank the committee for their time and attention to this important bill and ask that you vote favorable on Senate Bill 527.

I will now be glad to answer any questions, or my contact information is listed above and welcome any further inquiries you might have.

9 - SB 527 - JPR - MDH - LOS.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 1, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 527 – Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities - Peer Support Programs – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 527 – Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities - Peer Support Programs. SB 527 alters the definition of a peer support counseling program.

In 2022, House Bill 466 (2022), Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities - Peer Support Programs, established the Peer Support Counseling Program (Program) to provide counseling services from a peer support specialist to members of a fire, rescue, or emergency medical services entity. Health-General Article § 7.5–101 defines peer support services as “ a set of nonclinical activities provided by individuals in recovery from mental disorders, substance-related disorders, or addictive disorders who use their personal, lived experiences and training to support other individuals with mental disorders, substance-related disorders, or addictive disorders from a peer support specialist.”¹ MDH supports altering the definition of “peer support counseling program,” specifically removing the term “counseling,” to appropriately and accurately reflect the program’s intended purpose.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

¹Md. Health-General Code Ann. § 7.5-101

SB 527_Fire Rescue or EMS Peer Support_MIEMSS_Supp

Uploaded by: Theodore Delbridge

Position: FAV



State of Maryland
Maryland Institute *for* Emergency Medical Services Systems

Wes Moore
Governor

Clay B. Stamp
Chairman, EMS Board

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH
Executive Director

Senate Bill 527
Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Entities –
Peer Support Programs

MIEMSS Position: Support

Bill Summary: SB 527 clarifies statutory language pertaining to peer support programs for fire, rescue and emergency medical services (EMS). The clarifications are important to accurately reflect work that is underway to report on best practices and professional standards for these programs.

Rationale:

- Peer Support programs are an important component of maintaining the psychological well-being of emergency response personnel.
- Peer Support Programs provide voluntary access to individual and group support from peers and mental health professionals, and provide emotional, informational and social support to the first responder community. These Programs can also mitigate adverse psychological effects resulting from events experienced by emergency response personnel.
- Peer Support Programs help emergency responders deal not only with normal human reactions to everyday stresses, but also those these personnel face following abnormal and traumatic events experienced on the job, e.g., line of duty deaths, multiple casualty incidents and other distressing situations.
- Chapter 151 of the 2022 Session tasked the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to report on best practices and professional standards for peer support programs, including guidelines for establishing and operating peer support programs; training and certifying peer support specialists; and other important program components.
- BHA has convened a workgroup – the Maryland Alliance for Public Safety Support – that is comprised of personnel from across the public safety spectrum with expertise in peer support programs. The report is due on or before October 1, 2024.
- SB 527 clarifies language to reflect accurately the collaborative work that is underway to meet the statutory intent.

MIEMSS Supports SB 527 and asks for a Favorable Report

SB798_Testimony_Winterton_28Feb2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheri Winterton

Position: UNF

Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023

Working to foster God's vision for human flourishing

BILL: Senate Bill 798 / House Bill 705
TITLE: Declaration of Rights—Right to Reproductive Freedom
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
DATE: March 1, 2023 1:00 pm
WHO: Cheryl Winterton, Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023
POSITION: **OPPOSE**

Dear Honorable Chair Griffith:

I am writing in opposition of Senate Bill 798, which seeks to add the right to an abortion to the Maryland state constitution.

In 1985 when I was 19 years old, I chose to abort my unborn child. I thought that after terminating my pregnancy my life would go back to normal. It didn't. Psychologically, choosing to abort my unborn child impacted my life forever.

During my appointment with Planned Parenthood, they asked me if I was 100% sure that I wanted to abort my child. I said I was not. The intake nurse told me that I needed to decide because their waiting room was full and if I didn't decide right now it would impact their schedule for the day. I felt pressure from PP and I felt pressure from my boyfriend (the baby's father). I went through with it.

Months later I reflected that I wasn't myself. I didn't "get over it" like I thought I would. I used to be a happy person. Now I was depressed, and faking my happiness so others wouldn't see a change in me. I began suffering from decreased self-esteem, guilt, shame, loneliness, and sleep issues/nightmares that went on for years. After breaking up with that boyfriend, I found myself distrusting men. I also no longer trusted my closest girlfriends who told me to do it. I began displaying abnormal eating behaviors and would binge eat because it made me feel good. When I was 24 I sought counseling with a licensed psychologist. She confirmed that my bouts of depression, binge eating, sleep issues were a dominant psychological consequence of my decision to choose abortion.

As time passed, I worried about not being able to conceive or deliver a child in the future. This fear eventually became reality. I had infertility challenges. When I did finally conceive, I conceived twins, but lost one at 18 weeks. A few years after the birth of my only son, I went through infertility treatments in my attempt to conceive a second child. I miscarried again due to a blighted ovum. When I needed a procedure later to correct these challenges, the OB/GYN confirmed abortion was likely a contributing factor leading to a host of severe reproductive complications including a partial hysterectomy.

To this day, 37 years later, I dream of the child that I will never meet. Every December I think about him/her turning another year older. I imagine by now they would have been married and I would be a grandmother. I imagine he/she would be making a positive impact in our society.

Christians Advocating for Life in Annapolis 2023

Working to foster God's vision for human flourishing

Eventually I sought Christian counseling to process these experiences and now volunteer to support unwed pregnant teens. I have found peace through my relationship with Jesus. However, my choice had a profound impact on me that has lasted decades. If I could go back I wish there had been a resource for me to have heard the pros and cons of choosing to end my child's life. I only received the resource through Planned Parenthood which was "come pay us money and we will erase your mistake". They didn't tell me how the consequence of my choice would last for the rest of my life. I desired truth. I desired love.

I plead with Maryland Legislators, to consider my experience and that these physiological and psychological health effects do occur. I now believe my child and my health was worth protecting. I regret my decision. I believe better support for pregnant moms and informed consent are important issues not addressed by SB 798 and this amendment would make it hard to add these measures seen as "restrictions". This is unacceptable.

Thank you for considering how to better serve women in their reproductive years in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl T. Winterton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl T Winterton
Severn, MD