

HCS HB 1411 -- PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

SPONSOR: Rhoads

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill prohibits peer support specialists who obtain information from law enforcement officers or emergency services personnel while acting in their capacity as a peer support specialist to disclose any confidential information unless certain conditions specified in the bill are met. These conditions include threats of suicide, information relating to the abuse of spouses, children, or the elderly, admission of criminal conduct, and disclosure of certain protected information for which appropriate consent to disclose has been given.

There is no prohibition on communication between peer support specialists or any communication between the specialists and the supervisors or staff of an employee assistance program. There is also no prohibition on communication regarding fitness of an employee for duty between an employee assistance program and an employer.

This bill is similar to SB 616 (2018).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this program is already in effect but there is little participation because it is not confidential. This is a very important program, because officers need someone to talk to. More officers killed themselves last year than were killed in the line of duty. This legislation is not only about preventing suicide, but it is also about making sure we have officers who are healthy for service.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rhoads; Brad Lemon, Fraternal Order of Police; Missouri Troopers Association; Major Steve Young, Kansas City Missouri Police Department; Board of Police Commissioners; Missouri Police Chiefs Association; Missouri State Council of Firefighters; Missouri Ambulance Association; Ambulance District Association of Missouri; Jerry Johnston, Missouri Emergency Medical Services; and Missouri Coalition for Community Behavior Health Centers.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.