

SS SCS SB 57 -- FUNDING TO DETER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

SPONSOR: May (Roberts)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention by a vote of 8 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill establishes the "Critical Incident Stress Management Program" within the Department of Public Safety. The program shall provide services for peace officers to assist in coping with stress and potential psychological trauma resulting from a response to a critical incident or emotionally difficult event. A "critical incident" is any event outside the usual realm of human experience that is markedly distressing or evokes reactions of intense fear, helplessness, or horror and involves the perceived threat to a person's physical integrity or the physical integrity of someone else.

The bill provides that all peace officers shall be required to meet with a program service provider once every three to five years for a mental health check-in. The program service provider shall send a notification to the peace officer's commanding officer that he or she completed such check-in. Any information disclosed by a peace officer shall be privileged and shall not be used as evidence in criminal, administrative, or civil proceedings against the peace officer, except as in certain instances as provided in the bill. Additionally, the bill creates the "988 Public Safety Fund" within the State Treasury, which shall be used by the Department of Public Safety for the purposes of providing services for peace officers to assist in coping with stress and potential psychological trauma resulting from a response to a critical incident or emotionally difficult event. Such services may include consultation, risk assessment, education, intervention, and other crisis intervention services.

The bill creates the "Economic Distress Zone Fund", which shall be a fund used solely by the Department of Public Safety to provide funding to organizations registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) corporation that provide services to residents of the state in areas of high incidents of crime and deteriorating infrastructure, as defined in the bill, for the purpose of deterring criminal behavior in such areas. If money appropriated to the Fund exceeds \$3 million, excluding any money made available by gift or otherwise, such money shall revert to general revenue. This provision shall sunset on August 28, 2024.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this provides education and other crisis intervention services to our licensed peace officers and they can talk to people without the stigma of mental health issues.

They can deal with things they carry the burden for daily. This bill seeks to help that. The "988 Fund" is what would help law enforcement. Some sort of emergency zone fund to provide funding and services and infrastructure in high areas of crime. Law enforcement has its own funding mechanism. There is no mandatory reporting requirement in the peer support unless the person is threatening to cause harm to him or herself or someone else. There is no punishment for not doing this, but most officers want this service. More officers die by suicide than in the line of duty.

Testifying for the bill were Senator May; Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis; Missouri Fraternal Order of Police; St. Louis Police Officers Association; Kansas City Fraternal Order of Police; and Missouri Sheriffs United.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill submitted written testimony, which can be found online.

Testifying against the bill was Arnie C. Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.