

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 119-

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OFFERED BY MS. GILLEN OF NEW YORK

Add at the end of subtitle B of title XVII the following:

1 **SEC. 17__ . FIRST RESPONDERS WELLNESS.**

2 (a) FIRST RESPONDERS MENTAL HEALTH HOT-
3 LINE.—Part P of title III of the Public Health Service
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at
5 the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 399V-8. FIRST RESPONDERS MENTAL HEALTH HOT-**
7 **LINE.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the
9 date of enactment of the First Responders Wellness Act,
10 the Secretary, acting through the Assistant Secretary for
11 Mental Health and Substance Use, shall maintain, directly
12 or by contract or grant, a national first responders emer-
13 gency hotline to provide peer and emotional support, infor-
14 mation, brief intervention, and mental and behavioral
15 health and substance use disorder resources and referrals
16 to first responders and to their families or household mem-
17 bers.

1 “(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR HOTLINE.—The hotline
2 established under subsection (a) shall—

3 “(1) operate as a separate, widely recognizable
4 number with bidirectional transfer options with the
5 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline established pursuant
6 to section 520E–3;

7 “(2) provide toll-free, real-time, live assistance
8 24/7;

9 “(3) provide voice and text support;

10 “(4) be sufficiently staffed by, at a minimum,
11 culturally competent first responder peer specialists
12 or first responder mental health services providers
13 who have distinct knowledge of, and are trained
14 on—

15 “(A) the essential functions of first re-
16 sponders and public safety organizations;

17 “(B) the working conditions unique to first
18 responders;

19 “(C) common and novel stressors inherent
20 in public safety and emergency response work;

21 “(D) normal and abnormal adaptation to
22 occupational stress and trauma; and

23 “(E) the unique aspects of confidentiality
24 and testimonial privilege; and

1 “(5) provide peer support, mental and behav-
2 ioral health and substance use disorder assistance,
3 and referral services to meet the needs of first re-
4 sponders and family members or household members
5 at risk of experiencing mental or behavioral health
6 or substance use disorders.

7 “(c) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In maintaining the hotline
9 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

10 “(A) consult with the National Domestic
11 Violence Hotline, the 988 Suicide and Crisis
12 Lifeline, and the Veterans Crisis Line to ensure
13 that first responders are connected in real-time
14 to the appropriate specialized hotline service,
15 when applicable;

16 “(B) conduct a public awareness campaign
17 for the hotline under subsection (a);

18 “(C) consult with Federal departments and
19 agencies, including the Substance Abuse and
20 Mental Health Services Administration and the
21 Department of Justice, to increase awareness
22 regarding the hotline under subsection (a); and

23 “(D) consult with organizations that oper-
24 ate existing crisis or peer support hotlines for

1 first responders with respect to best practices
2 for operating such hotlines.

3 “(2) EXISTING HOTLINES.—The Secretary or
4 an entity receiving a grant or contract under sub-
5 section (a), as applicable, shall form partnerships be-
6 tween the existing national first responders mental
7 health hotline and other first responder helplines
8 and websites.

9 “(3) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall en-
10 sure that calls from public safety personnel received
11 through the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline are ap-
12 propriately referred to the hotline under subsection
13 (a).

14 “(4) TRAINING CURRICULUM.—Not later than 2
15 years after the date of enactment of the First Re-
16 sponders Wellness Act, the Secretary shall develop,
17 in coordination with mental health providers and
18 first responder associations or personnel, trauma-in-
19 formed and culturally competent training, guidance,
20 and standards for 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
21 network center personnel on the unique concerns, re-
22 sources, linkages, and stressors of first responders.

23 “(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit
24 an annual report to Congress on the hotline under sub-
25 section (a) and implementation of this section, including—

1 “(1) an evaluation of the effectiveness of activi-
2 ties conducted or supported under subsection (a);

3 “(2) an evaluation of staffing levels necessary
4 to maintain adequate services;

5 “(3) a directory of entities or organizations to
6 which staff maintaining the hotline funded under
7 this section may make referrals; and

8 “(4) such additional information as the Sec-
9 retary determines appropriate.

10 “(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 “(1) CULTURALLY COMPETENT FIRST RE-
12 SPONDER PEER SPECIALIST.—The term ‘culturally
13 competent first responder peer specialist’ means an
14 individual—

15 “(A) with familiarity with, and under-
16 standing of, the duties and unique stressors of
17 first responders, which may include experience
18 working as a first responder; and

19 “(B) who completed a trauma-informed
20 and culturally competent training curriculum
21 developed pursuant to subsection (c)(4), or an-
22 other trauma-informed and culturally com-
23 petent training curriculum, as the Secretary de-
24 termines appropriate.

1 “(2) FIRST RESPONDER.—The term ‘first re-
2 sponder’—

3 “(A) means—

4 “(i) a law enforcement officer, fire-
5 fighter, or member of a rescue squad or
6 ambulance crew (as such terms are defined
7 in section 1204 of title I of the Omnibus
8 Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of
9 1968); or

10 “(ii) a public safety telecommunicator,
11 including 9–1–1 operators and dispatchers;
12 and

13 “(B) includes a retired first responder.

14 “(3) FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH
15 SERVICES PROVIDER.—The term ‘first responder
16 mental health services provider’ includes a State-li-
17 censed or State-certified counselor, trauma coun-
18 selor, psychologist or other State licensed or certified
19 mental health professional who—

20 “(A) is qualified under State law to pro-
21 vide mental or behavioral health services; and

22 “(B) has a familiarity with and under-
23 standing of the duties and unique stressors of
24 first responders.

1 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
2 carry out this section, there are authorized to be appro-
3 priated \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through
4 2031.”.

5 (b) CRISIS COUNSELING ASSISTANCE AND TRAIN-
6 ING.—Section 416(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster
7 Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5183(a))
8 is amended by inserting “and to qualified emergency re-
9 sponse providers responding to major disasters” after
10 “victims of major disasters”.

