

SB 424 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Piluso

House Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 04/18/19

Action: Do Pass.

Vote: 11-0-0-0

Yeas: 11 - Barker, Bynum, Gorsek, Greenlick, Lewis, McLane, Piluso, Power, Sprenger, Stark, Williamson

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Channa Newell, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 4/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires law enforcement agencies to establish a mental health wellness policy for addressing mental health wellness issues related to law enforcement officers of that agency. Defines law enforcement agency as a city or municipal police department, a county sheriff's office, the Oregon State Police, or a university police department.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- 140-160 officers die by suicide each year
- Wellness policies developed and implemented in Hillsboro and Bend are nationally recognized programs
- Culture change in policing to embrace mental health wellness
- Specific focus of wellness policies on public safety and effects on officers and family
- Need for procedures as well as policies

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Several studies, including the Buffalo Cardio-Metabolic Occupational Police Stress (BCOPS) study and work built upon its findings, show that law enforcement officers have higher stress levels than the general population and correspondingly higher levels of stress-related diseases. In the early 2000s, the Bend Police Department began developing a wellness program. The program included a change in shift scheduling, on-duty physical fitness, and group exercise. Over time, the program grew to include a peer support team, an on-site contracted psychologist, a spousal support program, and mindfulness and yoga classes. In 2018, State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF) reports overall claims for on-the-job injuries were down 27 percent from the prior year and time-loss days were down 77 percent. According to the Bend Police Chief, while Bend experienced a 14.5 percent increase in calls to 911 since 2015, there was also a 40 percent reduction in use of force.

Senate Bill 424 requires law enforcement agencies to establish mental health wellness policies relating to police work.