

**HB 3426 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans**

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**Meeting Dates:** 3/23, 3/28

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Requires 988 crisis call centers to develop polices and train their staff to respond to firefighters and other first responders as a high-risk and specialized population.

**FIS:** *No fiscal impact*

**RIS:** *No revenue impact*

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Impact of repeated traumatic exposure on the mental health of first responders
- Multilayered public safety challenges for first responders

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act passed unanimously by Congress in October 2020 and replaced the National Suicide Hotline number with the three-digit number – 988 – effective July 16, 2022. The Legislative Assembly appropriated \$15 million in House Bill 2417 (2021) to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to establish 988 call centers and enhance mobile crisis services. HB 2417 also required 988 call centers to establish policies and train staff on serving high-risk and specialized populations.

According to a 2021 brief by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), first responders including law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services (EMS) clinicians, and public safety telecommunicators, are at an elevated risk for suicide due to workplace stress and trauma. The CDC cites law enforcement officers and firefighters are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty and that EMS providers are 1.39 times more likely to die by suicide than the public. The CDC also suggests that culturally competent mental health resources are needed for first responders, including trained personnel that understand the unique demands and culture in which they operate.

House Bill 3426 requires 988 call centers to develop policies and train staff to respond to calls from firefighters and first responders as a high-risk and specialized population.