



# OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters  
AFL-CIO CLC

Chair Kropf, Vice Chair Chotzen, Vice Chair Wallan, members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3929, which aims to protect the confidentiality of communication between individuals receiving peer support and their peer supporters, particularly for public safety employees. This bill is crucial for fostering a culture of trust and encouraging those in need to seek vital support services.

The establishment of a testimonial privilege for communications between certain public safety employees and their peer supporters is particularly important. Public safety professionals, including police officers, firefighters, and paramedics, face unique and often traumatic experiences in their line of duty. These experiences can lead to significant mental and emotional strain, requiring specialized support.

Peer support programs offer a safe and confidential space for these individuals to process their experiences, develop coping mechanisms, and receive empathetic understanding from those who have walked a similar path. The effectiveness of these programs hinges on the assurance that what is shared will remain confidential. Without this guarantee, individuals may be reluctant to fully engage in the support process, hindering their ability to heal and recover.

House Bill 3929 recognizes the critical role of peer support in promoting mental wellness and ensuring the well-being of our public safety personnel. By establishing a clear testimonial privilege, this bill will:

- **Enhance Trust and Encourage Help-Seeking:** Assuring confidentiality will encourage public safety employees to openly share their experiences and seek the support they need.
- **Protect the Integrity of Peer Support Programs:** Maintaining confidentiality is essential for the effectiveness of peer support, ensuring that these programs can function as intended.



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- **Promote Mental Wellness:** By facilitating access to peer support, this bill will contribute to the overall mental health and well-being of our public safety professionals.
- **Improve Public Safety:** Healthy and supported public safety employees are better equipped to serve and protect our communities.

Therefore, I urge you to support House Bill 3929. This legislation is a vital step towards ensuring that our public safety employees have access to the confidential support they need to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alan Ferschweiler  
Legislative Director  
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council