



City of Portland

Office of the Deputy
City Administrator
1120 SW 5th Ave. # 114
Portland, OR, 97204

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Public Safety Service Area Mike Myers, Deputy City Administrator

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May 6, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court St NE HR E
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Portland's Public Safety Service Area, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 3929, which will create a necessary level of confidentiality protections for public safety employees who serve in a peer supporter role. This bill is so important to support the mental health and well-being of the public safety professionals who rely on peer support during and after traumatic incidents and vicarious trauma.

There is more general awareness of the toll that working as a police officer or firefighter can have on a person's mental health. There is less awareness of the impact on professional 9-1-1 communicators who stay with their calls through extremely traumatic incidents. Prospective employees of the Portland Bureau of Emergency Communication (BOEC) go through a rigorous psychological assessment to ensure candidates are well prepared for the unique stresses of serving as a 9-1-1 dispatcher. These include responding swiftly and professionally during high-stakes emergencies; including violent altercations, break-ins, severe traffic accidents, fires, medical crises, and more. While these events are traumatic for the callers, they also have a profound impact on the dispatchers who must maintain composure while guiding the caller through some of life's hardest moments.



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Peer counseling services are one of the most effective forms of support available for the dedicated first responders on both ends of a call, from the 9-1-1 dispatcher to the police officer, firefighter and medics who respond. The opportunity to speak with a peer who has a firsthand understanding of the unique challenges our employees face is invaluable and helps sustain an effective and resilient workforce. Unfortunately, there are gaps in the confidentiality between peers, which can discourage staff from confiding in a peer support specialist when they need that support most.

House Bill 3929 addresses this gap by affirming the confidentiality of peer support sessions for public safety professionals. Ensuring peer supporters cannot be compelled to disclose the content of these conversations, this bill strengthens a critical avenue for healing and resilience. Protecting the privacy of these discussions is essential to equipping public safety employees with the tools they need to continue serving their communities with strength and compassion.

For these reasons, I urge your support of House Bill 3929.

Sincerely,

Mike Myers
Deputy City Administrator
Public Safety Service Area

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