

Bill: 1st substitute HB 338 – First Responder Health Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Wilcox

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Track

This Bill amends requirements for providing mental health resources to first responders.

Discussion: 1st substitute HB 338 changes and expands how mental health resources are provided to first responders in Utah. The Bill updates the requirements for first responder agencies to provide or make available mental health services to their personnel, and in some cases extends those supports to family members, adjusting eligibility and clarifying the duties of the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) and other agencies in ensuring access to counseling and wellness programs. It also makes technical and conforming changes related to existing statutes governing mental health services for law enforcement and other first responders. The sponsor explained that the Bill creates a program that entities may opt into for a \$25 per person fee which would allow those individuals access to the DPS network. The sponsor noted that the total cost of participation is currently unknown, that no new appropriations are included in the Bill, and that the program is structured similarly to grant programs used in the past. Representative Whyte spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

N/V: 4

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 338 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: SB 166 – Line-of-Duty Benefit Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Owens

Floor Sponsor: Representative Burton

UASD Position: Support

This Bill modifies provisions related to line-of-duty death benefits.

Discussion: The sponsor explained that the Bill ensures that when a law enforcement officer or fire fighter passes away in the line-of-duty, the first responder’s spouse and children will continue to receive medical benefits until the children reach the age of 18 by authorizing the Local Public Safety and Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust Fund Board of Trustees to use money from the trust fund to pay for the healthcare benefits. This expense is currently incurred by the employer. Representative Stoddard spoke in support of the Bill. It was placed on the consent calendar.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0
N/V: 4

Outcome: SB 166 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

UNASSD