

AMADOR COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS
810 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642

Please Note: All Board of Supervisors meetings are tape-recorded.

Anyone who wishes to address the Board must speak from the podium and should print their name on the Board Meeting Speaker list, which is located on the podium. The Clerk will collect the list at the end of the meeting.

CONSENT ADDENDUM AGENDA

DATE: Tuesday, September 24, 2019
TIME: 9:00 AM
LOCATION: COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS
810 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642

1. ADDENDUM #1

1.a. Assembly Bill 1116 (Tim Grayson): Approval of Chairman's Signature on a letter of support relative to AB 1116 as it relates to setting statewide Standards for Firefighter peer Support and Crisis Referral Programs.

Suggested Action: Approval

[AB 1116 Background.pdf](#) [AB1116 Letter.doc](#) 2.

2. ADDENDUM #2

2.a. Senate Bill 542 (Henry Stern): Approval of Chairman's Signature on a letter of Support relative to SB542 as it Relates to helping facilitate timely treatment for firefighters who are suffering with a Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI). Suggested Action: Approval

[SB542 Background.pdf](#) [SB 542 Letter.doc](#)

Board of Supervisors Agenda Item Report

Submitting Department: Board of Supervisors

Meeting Date: September 24, 2019

SUBJECT

Assembly Bill 1116 (Tim Grayson): Approval of Chairman's Signature on a letter of support relative to AB 1116 as it relates to setting statewide Standards for Firefighter peer Support and Crisis Referral Programs.

Recommendation:

Approval

4/5 vote required:

No

Distribution Instructions:

File

ATTACHMENTS

- [AB 1116 Background.pdf](#)
- [AB1116 Letter.doc](#)

SUMMARY

AB 1116 sets statewide standards for firefighter peer support and crisis referral programs and where those programs comply with the state standards, the bill confers confidentiality for those communications between peer supporters and firefighters. In short, AB 1116 will save lives, while also help raise awareness about these job-caused injuries and destigmatizing the condition for those seeking help.

STATUS

- *Introduced Feb. 21, 2019*
- *Amended Mar. 18, 2019*
- *Approved unanimously by Assembly Health Committee on Apr. 9, 2019*
- *Approved unanimously by Assembly Judiciary Committee on Apr. 23, 2019*
- *Amended Apr. 24, 2019*
- *Approved unanimously by Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 16, 2019*
- *Approved by Assembly (78-0) on May 29, 2019*
- *Approved unanimously by Senate Health Committee on Jul. 3, 2019*
- *Amended Jul. 11, 2019*
- *Referred to Senate Appropriations – Hearing TBA*

BACKGROUND

The nature, frequency, and unpredictability of a firefighter's work environment can take an overwhelming toll – both physically and emotionally. The psychological and emotional stress of their profession can follow a firefighter long after their 24 or 48-hour shift is over. For some, the trauma endured can be crushing and manifest itself in various ways, including post-traumatic stress, substance use, and other addictions, or, tragically, even suicide.

Historically, the culture of the firehouse and the stigma attached to talking about these traumatic experiences prevent firefighters from diffusing the impacts of disturbing scenes and the overall psychological and emotional stressors associated with the job. Ever-present in a firefighter's mind is whether "opening up" about acute job



stress may result in an adverse job action, rejection by their peers or a lack of confidence in their own ability to do their job and protect those they are sworn to protect.

A significant step in eliminating the stigma and alleviating those fears is to provide an avenue for confidential conversations between a firefighter and a trained peer supporter – someone who has endured the same occupational stressors and has lived the same experiences.

Current law enables communications between specified individuals to be treated as confidential and in some cases, privileged, such as the communication between a psychotherapist and a patient, unless there is reasonable cause to believe that the patient poses a danger to themselves or another person. In such instances, disclosing confidential communication(s) is necessary to prevent the danger.

Firefighting is [one of the top most stressful occupations imaginable](#) -- only combat soldiers endure more stress. Like enlisted military personnel, firefighters are uniquely susceptible to the emotional and mental impacts of these stressors:

- Constant exposure to horrific events;
- Life and death decisions in a firefighter's hands;
- Erratic and unusual sleep patterns;
- Increasingly large workload -- response and training;
- Long separation from family -- extended shifts, mutual aid strike teams, and back-to-back wildfire responses.



Firefighters regularly respond to fires, stabbings, gun battles and shootings, domestic violence incidents, terrorist acts, automobile accidents, airplane crashes and earthquakes, just to name a few. Firefighters witness young children dying and grieving families. At the same time, they

BACKGROUND (CONT.)

are regularly exposed to communicable diseases and known carcinogens in the course of their work. And, it is not uncommon for a firefighter to be threatened by the individual they are attempting to help during an emergency. Further, during the firestorms of this past decade, firefighters also have endured a growing stress while worrying about whether their own homes would burn down while on the fire lines protecting others -- often while the safety of their own family was threatened. Additionally, many firefighters are pained when driving through firestorm wreckage, seeing their homes and the homes of friends and neighbors burned to ash without being able to stop and assist or provide comfort. Despite these cruel realities, the call to respond is simple for many California firefighters: it's their job.

The effects of post-traumatic stress can be seen in an array of issues ... some seemingly trivial, others deadly: anger and irritability; sleep problems; depression; marital and family issues; substance abuse; or thoughts of suicide.

According to the International Association of Fire Fighters, 20% of fire service members suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), compared to 8% among all adults. For some firefighters, the occupational trauma endured can be crushing and manifest itself in the various ways described above. What we know now is that hidden injuries of the job are just as real as the ones that can be seen. *Sadly, the fire service is four times more likely to experience a suicide than a "traditional" line-of-duty death in any given year. In fact, more firefighters committed suicide in 2017 than died in traumatic job-caused incidents. In 2016, one estimate puts the number of firefighter suicides at 99.*

[A survey co-authored by California Professional Firefighters and NBC-Bay Area](#) found that nearly one in six firefighters have considered suicide. National surveys have put the number as high as one in three. [Many are suffering in silence.](#) While suicide in the general population is primarily the result of depression, firefighters more often kill themselves because of post-traumatic stress. The stories are heartbreaking:

- [CAL FIRE Captain Dies by Suicide at Bridge](#) -- *Fire Rescue 1*
- [Orange County Firefighter's Suicide Part of a Sad Trend](#) -- *Orange County Register*
- [North Hollywood firefighter, 22, dies while off duty](#) -- *Los Angeles Daily News*

AB 1116: WHY IT'S NEEDED

On the evening of January 10, 2019, a multi-vehicle crash occurred in downtown Davis. The scene that night was beyond chaotic. In a matter of few seconds, priorities shifted dramatically. At the scene, a responding police officer was shot and killed and firefighters, while attempting to triage the crash and officer, found themselves navigating a barrage of bullets from the same shooter. During it all, Davis firefighters continued doing their job and tried their best to save the young officer as they rode in the ambulance and continued to perform CPR all the way to the hospital.

Firefighters are often their own worst critics and can sometimes fail to recognize their own limitations. The transition from taking care of others to healing themselves can be blurred. After such a horrific event, different scenarios sometimes get stuck on repeat in a firefighter's mind: What more could I have done? Or, why wasn't it me instead? No doubt, these thoughts weigh heavily and can have prolonged, profound impacts on a firefighter's health.

It's time to break the stigma. Speaking up is not a weakness ... it is the strongest, healthiest thing our public safety personnel can do and this bill provides the tools necessary to help facilitate these life-saving conversations.

A significant step in changing the old culture of the firehouse and the stigma attached to talking about the traumatic experiences that firefighters endure is to provide an avenue for confidential conversations between a firefighter in need of help and a peer supporter -- someone who has lived the same experiences and endured the same psychological and emotional stressors associated with firefighting.

The objective is reflected in the name -- peer support -- aiding their peer as a firefighter in need of help connect them with professional treatment or support in dealing with occupational stressors and any resulting behavioral health, psychological trauma, or substance use.

Across the state, our firefighters continue to stand up to nature's fury and, although physically and emotionally exhausted, they stay the course until the job is done.

This bill supports those who are defending our lives and property on the front lines.



9/24/2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
% Legislative Unit - leg.unit@gov.ca.gov
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1116 (Grayson) – Peer Support and Crisis Referral Services Pilot Program.
(SUPPORT – Request for Signature)**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The Amador County Board of Supervisors, strongly supports AB 1116, which has been approved by the Legislature and is making its way to your desk for consideration. ***We respectfully request your signature on AB 1116 when it comes before you.***

Like enlisted military personnel, firefighters are witness to horrors few can imagine. The nature, frequency, and unpredictability of a firefighter’s work environment can take an overwhelming toll – both physically and emotionally. Left unaddressed, they can sometimes lead to harmful behaviors and, tragically, even suicide.

AB 1116 sets statewide standards for firefighter peer support and crisis referral programs. It confers confidentiality for related communications between peer supporters and firefighters.

More than one-quarter of all fire personnel responding to human disasters experience acute stress disorder. **In 2017, more firefighters committed suicide than died in traumatic job-caused incidents. In any given year, a firefighter is four times as likely to die by their own hand than in an on-duty incident.**

AB 1116 gives peer supporters the training tools they need to help firefighters at risk of post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI).

AB 1116 supports those who are defending our lives and property on the front lines. By authorizing confidential peer support programs, AB 1116 will save lives, while also help raise awareness about these job-caused injuries and destigmatize the condition for those seeking help. For these reasons, **we urge your signature on this important bill.**

Respectfully,

Brian Oneto
Chairman, Amador County Board of Supervisors

Board of Supervisors Agenda Item Report

Submitting Department: Board of Supervisors

Meeting Date: September 24, 2019

SUBJECT

Senate Bill 542 (Henry Stern): Approval of Chairman's Signature on a letter of Support relative to SB542 as it Relates to helping facilitate timely treatment for firefighters who are suffering with a Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI).

Recommendation:

Approval

4/5 vote required:

No

Distribution Instructions:

File

ATTACHMENTS

- [SB542 Background.pdf](#)
- [SB 542 Letter.doc](#)

SB 542 (Henry Stern, D-Canoga Park)

Firefighter & Law Enforcement Post-Traumatic Stress

Co-Sponsor: California Professional Firefighters

www.cpf.org | 916.921.9111

ISSUE

The nature, frequency, and unpredictability of a firefighter's or law enforcement officer's work environment can take an overwhelming toll – both physically and emotionally. Their chronic exposure to traumatic events and critical incidents increases their risk for post-traumatic stress and other stress-induced symptoms.

Existing law provides rebuttable workers' compensation protections to public safety officers who contract certain illnesses or sustain injuries in the course of doing their jobs. However, existing law does not currently extend such protections in instances where a firefighter or law enforcement officer sustains a post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) resulting from the occupational horrors they incur in their sworn mission to protect lives and property.

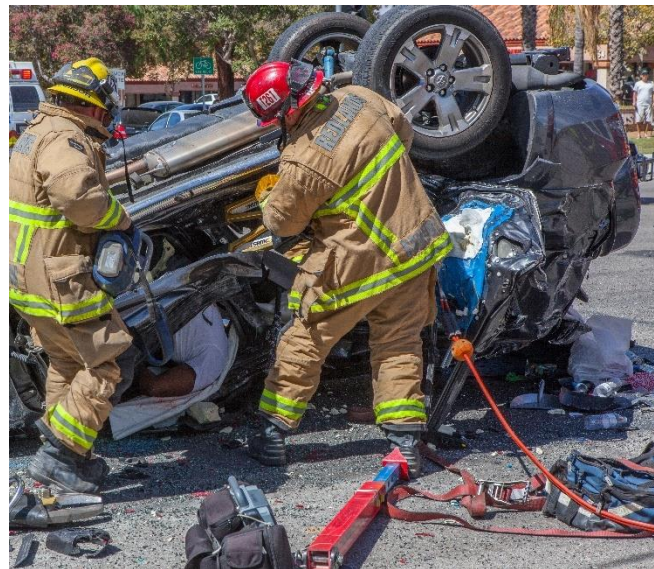
STATUS

- ✓ *Introduced Feb. 22, 2019*
- ✓ *Approved unanimously by Senate Labor, Public Employment & Retirement Committee on Apr. 10, 2019*
- ✓ *Approved by Senate Appropriations Committee (5-1) on May 16, 2019*
- ✓ *Approved by Senate (33-3) on May 21, 2019*
- ✓ *Approved unanimously by the Assembly Insurance Committee on July 10, 2019*
- ✓ *Amended Aug. 13, 2019*
- ✓ *Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee*

BACKGROUND

Firefighting and law enforcement are [two of the most stressful occupations imaginable](#) -- only combat soldiers endure more stress. Like enlisted military personnel, firefighting and law enforcement personnel are uniquely susceptible to the emotional and mental impacts of these stressors, including:

- Constant exposure to horrific and catastrophic events;
- Life and death decisions in a firefighter's hands;
- Erratic and unusual sleep patterns;
- Increasingly large workload -- response and training; and



- Long separation from family -- extended shifts, mutual aid strike teams, back-to-back wildfire responses.

Firefighters and law enforcement officers regularly respond to structure fires, massive wildfires, stabbings, gun battles and shootings, domestic violence incidents, terrorist acts, automobile accidents, airplane crashes and earthquakes, just to name a few. On any given shift, firefighters and law enforcement personnel can be called on to make life and death decisions, witness a young child dying alongside their grief-stricken family, or be exposed to a myriad of communicable diseases and known carcinogens – all while at significant risk of bodily harm or physical assault when performing their job-related duties.

Constant, cumulative exposure to such horrific events make firefighters and law enforcement personnel uniquely susceptible to the emotional and behavioral impacts of job-caused stressors. This is especially true for firefighters since the nature of job often calls for lengthy separation from their family due to a long shift or wildfire strike team response.

Today, a firefighter's or law enforcement officer's occupational stress is heightened in the face of California's "new normal" -- an increase in active shooter events, as well as wildland and wildland-urban interface fires, which continue to annually increase as hot, dry and wind-whipped conditions persist.

For firefighters, California's year-round fire seasons and climatic factors are conducive to large-scale, devastating fire events. In 2018, the Carr Fire produced a 'fire tornado' that reached a 143 MPH and caused a cataclysmic path of destruction in Redding, where two firefighters were among the seven people who lost their lives.

BACKGROUND (CONT.)

Similar to last year's devastation, the catastrophic wildfires that swept across our state in 2017 claimed 47 souls, including 2 firefighters, destroyed countless neighborhoods, and, at the time, comprised the worst wildfire season on record, with five of the 20 most destructive wildland-urban interface fires in the state's history. In fact, over 40 firefighters lost their own homes that year in the North Bay fires, many of whom were out on the fire line at the time.

Last year's fire storms and debris flows, as well as those of 2017 were a brutal reminder of the ferocity of wildfire and how all too often on-duty firefighters and law enforcement officers incur the stress of witnessing victims flee, and assisting in evacuation efforts, while worrying about whether their own homes, and the safety of their families and neighbors are threatened. And, on-duty firefighters and law enforcement officers endure the added pain of driving through wreckage, seeing only foundations of homes or worse, sorting through the devastation for skeletal remains, of family, friends and neighbors.

While the cumulative impacts of these aggressive, deadly events are taking their toll, our firefighters and law enforcement officers continue to stand up to human-caused devastation and nature's fury, but they are physically and emotionally exhausted.

It is suggested that between 7% and 11% of firefighters suffer from clinical levels of depressive symptoms. The rate of post-traumatic stress in fire service personnel who have responded to human disasters is 17%, and the rate of depression is even higher at 22%. The rate of acute stress disorder after exposure to disasters is 26%.

According to the International Association of Fire Fighters, research further suggests that repeated exposure to trauma appears to increase risk for development of certain mental health disorders. For example, firefighters who have previous disaster experience are seven times more likely to develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with further disaster response. It's estimated that 20% of fire service members currently suffer from PTSD, compared to 8% among all adults. The effects of post-traumatic stress can be seen in an array of issues ... some seemingly trivial, others deadly:

- Anger and irritability;
- Sleep problems;

- Depression;
- Marital and family issues;
- Substance abuse; or
- Thoughts of suicide

For some, the trauma endured can be crushing and can manifest itself in the various ways described above. What we know now is that hidden injuries of the job are just as real as the ones that can be seen. *Sadly, the fire service is four times more likely to experience a suicide than a "traditional" line-of-duty death in any given year.*

In fact, more firefighters committed suicide in 2017 than died in traumatic job-caused incidents. In 2016, one estimate puts the number of firefighter suicides at 99.

[A survey co-authored by California Professional Firefighters and NBC-Bay Area](#) found that nearly one in six firefighters have considered suicide. National surveys have put the number as high as one in three. [Many are suffering in silence.](#)

While suicide in the general population is primarily the result of depression, firefighters more often kill themselves because of post-traumatic stress. The stories are heartbreaking:

- [CAL FIRE Captain Dies by Suicide at Bridge -- Fire Rescue 1](#)
- [Orange County Firefighter's Suicide Part of a Sad Trend -- Orange County Register](#)
- [North Hollywood firefighter, 22, dies while off duty -- Los Angeles Daily News](#)

Existing state law extends various rebuttable presumptions to firefighters and law enforcement personnel, which state that in the case of performing their active duties, certain injuries and illnesses are presumed to be job-caused and therefore compensable under the workers' compensation system if such injuries or illnesses develop or manifest while the public safety officer was in active service.

Unless controverted by other evidence, the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board is bound to find that such an injury or illness is in job-caused. Depending on the injury or illness, the rebuttable presumption is extended to a public safety officer for a certain period of time for each full year of service they worked, not to exceed statutorily-defined caps beyond their last day of service:

- [Labor Code §3212](#): Heart, Hernia and, Pneumonia
- [Labor Code §3212.1](#): Cancer
- [Labor Code §3212.6](#): Tuberculosis

SB 542

Firefighter & Law Enforcement Post-Traumatic Stress

Fact Sheet • 09/11/19

Page 2

BACKGROUND (CONT.)

- [Labor Code §3212.8](#): Blood-Borne Infectious Diseases and Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)
- [Labor Code §3212.85](#): Bio-Chemical Exposures
- [Labor Code §3212.9](#): Meningitis

To date, three states – Washington, Maine and Vermont – and six Canadian provinces have codified PTSI presumptions for their first responders. Eight states – Oregon, Colorado, Arizona, Nebraska, New York, Texas, Tennessee, and Florida – have added PTSD and other behavioral health disorders to the list of occupationally-related diseases in first responders for the purpose of workers' compensation benefit eligibility.

SB 542: WHY IT'S NEEDED

Since these above-referenced presumptions were first enacted, some decades ago, research conducted, and anecdotal information revealed in recent years demonstrate the critical need to extend workers' compensation protections to firefighters and law enforcement officers in instances where occupational PTSI is sustained.

Across the state, these public safety professionals continue to stand up to nature's fury and, although physically and emotionally exhausted, they stay the course until the job is done. While the fire service is doing its part to raise awareness and provide support to their peers on the job, access to treatment without delay or denial is desperately needed.

SB 542 is a much-needed step toward supporting those who are defending our lives and property on the front lines. It will help facilitate timely treatment for a firefighter or law enforcement officer who is suffering with a PTSI and in doing so, enables a quick recovery and return to work.

This bill also helps raise awareness about these job-caused injuries, while destigmatizing the condition for those seeking treatment for their illness. It is clear from the research that firefighting and law enforcement personnel are at increased risk for PTSI.

By providing, for 5 years, a rebuttable presumption in such cases, SB 542 will remove barriers to care and, in turn, save lives. The five-year sunset will allow time for analysis of the benefit and effectiveness of the law and certainly demonstrate the value of the PTSI presumption to the men and women of the fire service.





9/24/2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
% Legislative Unit - leg.unit@gov.ca.gov
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of The Amador County Board of Supervisors, I write to express our strong support for SB 542, which has been approved by the Legislature and is making its way to your desk for consideration. ***We respectfully request your signature on SB542 when it comes before you.***

As firefighters, the nature, frequency and unpredictability of our work environment can take an overwhelming toll – both physically and emotionally. Research shows that our chronic exposure to traumatic events and critical incidents increase our risk for post-traumatic stress and other stress-induced symptoms.

It's suggested that between 7% and 11% of firefighters suffer from clinical levels of depressive symptoms. The rate of post-traumatic stress in fire service personnel who have responded to human disasters is 17%, and the rate of depression is even higher at 22%. The rate of acute stress disorder after exposure to disasters is 26%.

According to the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), research further suggests that repeated exposure to trauma appears to increase risk for the development of certain mental health disorders. For example, firefighters who have previous disaster experience are seven times more likely to develop PTSD with further disaster response. It's estimated that 20% of fire service members currently suffer from PTSD, compared to 8% among all adults. And, sadly, the fire service is four times more likely to experience a suicide than a "traditional" line-of-duty death in any given year. In 2017, more firefighters committed suicide than died in traumatic job-caused incidents. Since 2014, more than 100 firefighters have died each year by their own hand than in on-duty incidents.

For decades, California has provided rebuttable workers' compensation protections to public safety officers, including firefighters, who contract specific illnesses or sustain certain injuries in the course of doing our job. However, the law does not currently extend such protections in instances where a firefighter sustains a post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) resulting from the occupational horrors we incur on a regular basis in our sworn mission to protect lives and property.

SB 542 helps facilitate timely treatment for a firefighter who is suffering with a PTSI. This bill enables a quick recovery and return to work. It also helps raise awareness about these kinds of job-caused injuries, while destigmatizing the condition for those who seek treatment for their illness. For these reasons, we **urge your support for this important bill.**

Respectfully,

Brian Oneto
Chairman, Amador County Board of Supervisors