



LETICIA CASTILLO

58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 1115 - Peace officers: mental health liaisons.

IN BRIEF:

Assembly Bill 1115 authorizes local governments to designate one or more existing employees specializing in counseling or mental health services as a law enforcement mental health liaison to facilitate mental health support for peace officers who serve the local jurisdiction.

EXISTING LAW:

Local governments are authorized under the California Constitution to make and enforce regulations related to public health and safety. Existing law requires counties and cities to take necessary measures to preserve public health. However, there is no statutory requirement for local governments to provide dedicated mental health liaisons for law enforcement officers.

THE ISSUE:

Law enforcement officers frequently experience traumatic events, including violent crimes, accidents, and fatalities. These exposures contribute to high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and substance abuse among officers. Despite the significant need for mental health support, many officers face barriers to accessing care, including stigma, concerns about confidentiality, and a lack of specialized mental health resources tailored to first responders.

Untreated mental health conditions can negatively impact an officer's well-being, job performance, and decision-making, posing risks to public safety. Officers experiencing burnout, fatigue, or emotional distress may struggle to respond effectively in high-stress situations. Ensuring access to mental health resources is critical to supporting law enforcement personnel and enhancing public safety.

THE SOLUTION:

AB 1115 allows local governments to designate existing employees specializing in mental health or counseling as law enforcement mental health liaisons. These liaisons will serve as a resource to facilitate mental health support for peace officers, helping them navigate available services and encouraging early intervention. By integrating mental health support within law enforcement agencies, this bill aims to reduce stigma, improve officer well-being, and enhance overall public safety.

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