

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE HELPING EMERGENCY RESPONDERS OVERCOME (HERO) ACT

Offered by:
International Association of Fire Fighters
National Volunteer Fire Council

WHEREAS, fire fighters and emergency medical personnel routinely experience high stress in chaotic and uncontrolled circumstances on the job, including serving as eyewitnesses to catastrophic incidents involving property loss, injury and death, and

WHEREAS up to one-third of fire fighters and emergency medical personnel will demonstrate some or all the criteria used to diagnose post-traumatic stress, and

WHEREAS many fire departments lack sufficient capabilities to assist personnel by providing counseling, support services and coping tools for those suffering from post-traumatic stress and co-occurring disorders, and

WHEREAS peer-support behavioral health and wellness programs within fire departments allow trained peer counselors to conduct outreach to fire fighters and their families to assist with issues associated with post-traumatic stress, substance abuse and co-related conditions, and

WHEREAS new guidance and resources for fire departments and mental health professionals will help better identify and treat post-traumatic stress in fire fighters and emergency medical personnel, and

WHEREAS, there is no current means to accurately capture data regarding incidences of suicide among fire fighters and emergency medical personnel, and

WHEREAS, establishing a national database to capture incidents of suicide among fire fighters and emergency medical personnel will allow scientists and mental health professionals to more fully examine and understand post-traumatic stress and related mental health concerns among such personnel, and

WHEREAS, the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Act of 2019 would help address these needs by providing resources to increase recognition and treatment of post-traumatic stress among emergency responders, provide grants to educate and deploy peer counselors and collect data on suicide among emergency responders;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Congressional Fire Services Institute supports the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Act and encourages Members of Congress to support the Act.

Unanimously Approved on April 26, 2019.