

34:15-31.15 to 34:15-31.17
LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST
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LAWS OF: 2025 **CHAPTER:** 134

NJSA: 34:15-31.15 to 34:15-31.17 Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.

BILL NO: A5792 (Substituted for S4590 (1R))

SPONSOR(S) Freiman, Roy and others

DATE INTRODUCED: 6/16/2025

COMMITTEE: **ASSEMBLY:** Labor

SENATE: --

AMENDED DURING PASSAGE: Yes

DATE OF PASSAGE: **ASSEMBLY:** 06/30/2025

SENATE: 06/30/2025

DATE OF APPROVAL: 8/21/2025

FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:

FINAL TEXT OF BILL (A5792 Aca (1R) enacted)

ADVANCE LAW Yes

PAMPHLET LAW Yes

A5792

INTRODUCED BILL: (Includes sponsor(s) statement) Yes

REPRINT(S): Yes ALA 6/16/25 1R

TECHNICAL REVIEW OF BILL: No

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** Yes

SENATE: No

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: Yes

S4590 (1R)

INTRODUCED BILL: (Includes sponsor(s) statement) Yes

REPRINT(S): Yes SBA 6/26/25 1R

TECHNICAL REVIEW OF BILL: No

COMMITTEE STATEMENT:	ASSEMBLY:	No
	SENATE:	Yes

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, ***may possibly*** be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:	No
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LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:	Yes
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VETO MESSAGE:	No
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GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:	Yes
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LEGISLATOR STATEMENT:	Yes
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FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS:	No
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HEARINGS:	No
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NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:	No
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CL/MMcB

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 134, *approved August 21, 2025*
Assembly, No. 5792 (*First Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** concerning first responders and supplementing chapter 15
2 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.
3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:
6
7 1. As used in this act:
8 “Critical incident” means an event involving the firing of a
9 weapon or an exchange of gun fire; serious bodily injury to or the
10 death of a minor; a terrorist act; a hostage situation; serious bodily
11 injury to or the death of another first responder employed in the
12 same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death
13 occurred in the performance of that first responder’s official duties;
14 a personal injury or wound; serious bodily injury received in the
15 performance of the first responder’s official duties; the visual or
16 audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible
17 witnessing of the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of
18 one or more persons; the response to or direct involvement in a
19 criminal investigation of an offense involving violent crimes against
20 minors; the need for rescue in the line of duty where one’s life was
21 in danger; or the response to or direct involvement in an
22 investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a minor.
23 “First responder” means a ¹paid 9-1-1 first responder
24 dispatcher,¹ law enforcement officer ¹**[or]** ¹paid firefighter ¹, or
25 paid member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency,
26 ambulance, or rescue squad association, or any other individual
27 who, in the course of that individual's employment, is dispatched to
28 the scene of an emergency situation for the purpose of providing
29 medical care or other assistance¹.
30 “Law enforcement officer” means a person who is employed as a
31 sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement
32 agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those
33 governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection,
34 investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of
35 persons violating the criminal laws of the State.
36 “Mental health professional” means a licensed mental health
37 professional, who holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to
38 subsection a. of section 6 or subsection a. or d. of section 8 of
39 P.L.1991, c.134 (C.45:15BB-1 et seq.), who is culturally competent
40 in mental health issues related to first responders and specializes in

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
¹Assembly ALA committee amendments adopted June 16, 2025.

1 treating first responders related to critical incidents in law
2 enforcement and firefighting.

3 “Minor” means a person under the age of 18 years.

4 "Paid firefighter" or "firefighter" means a full-time paid
5 firefighter employed by a public fire department.

6 “Peer support team” means law enforcement officers trained by
7 culturally competent mental health professionals to provide
8 emotional and practical assistance to first responders.

9 "Public fire department" or "department" means any department
10 of a municipality, county, fire district or the State or any agency
11 thereof having employees engaged in firefighting provided that such
12 firefighting employees are included in a negotiating unit exclusively
13 comprised of firefighting employees.

14 “Resiliency program officer” means a designated law
15 enforcement
16 officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of
17 the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-
18 LE) within the officer’s employing agency, pursuant to Attorney
19 General Directive No. 2019-1.

20

21 2. a. An employer of first responders shall provide for up to 12
22 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the
23 provisions of R.S.34:15-1 et seq. with a mental health professional
24 to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course
25 of the first responder’s employment, related to the first responder’s
26 experience of the critical incident. The counseling is in addition to,
27 and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer
28 sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The
29 first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health
30 professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this
31 subsection.

32 b. If a mental health professional determines that the first
33 responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed
34 counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours
35 of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder’s
36 condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an
37 additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

38 c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this
39 section are required to be completed within one year after the first
40 responder’s first visit to a mental health professional.

41 d. The employer of the first responder shall not require the use
42 of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or
43 any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to
44 this section occurs during the first responder’s established work
45 hours.

46

47 3. Interactions related to mental health support between a law
48 enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of

1 a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program
2 officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to
3 disclose mental health support related communications with another
4 law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is
5 reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when
6 there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law
7 enforcement officer.

8

9 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

10

11

12

13

14 Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain
15 counseling services for first responders and provides that certain
16 mental health related communications are confidential.

CHAPTER 134

AN ACT concerning first responders and supplementing chapter 15 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.34:15-31.15 Definitions.

1. As used in this act:

“Critical incident” means an event involving the firing of a weapon or an exchange of gun fire; serious bodily injury to or the death of a minor; a terrorist act; a hostage situation; serious bodily injury to or the death of another first responder employed in the same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death occurred in the performance of that first responder’s official duties; a personal injury or wound; serious bodily injury received in the performance of the first responder’s official duties; the visual or audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible witnessing of the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of one or more persons; the response to or direct involvement in a criminal investigation of an offense involving violent crimes against minors; the need for rescue in the line of duty where one’s life was in danger; or the response to or direct involvement in an investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a minor.

“First responder” means a paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatcher, law enforcement officer, paid firefighter, or paid member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency, ambulance, or rescue squad association or any other individual who, in the course of that individual’s employment, is dispatched to the scene of an emergency situation for the purpose of providing medical care or other assistance.

“Law enforcement officer” means a person who is employed as a sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection, investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of persons violating the criminal laws of the State.

“Mental health professional” means a licensed mental health professional who holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to subsection a. of section 6 or subsection a. or d. of section 8 of P.L.1991, c.134 (C.45:15BB-1 et seq.), who is culturally competent in mental health issues related to first responders, and specializes in treating first responders related to critical incidents in law enforcement and firefighting.

“Minor” means a person under the age of 18 years.

"Paid firefighter" or "firefighter" means a full-time paid firefighter employed by a public fire department.

“Peer support team” means law enforcement officers trained by culturally competent mental health professionals to provide emotional and practical assistance to first responders.

"Public fire department" or "department" means any department of a municipality, county, fire district or the State or any agency thereof having employees engaged in firefighting provided that such firefighting employees are included in a negotiating unit exclusively comprised of firefighting employees.

“Resiliency program officer” means a designated law enforcement officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-LE) within the officer’s employing agency, pursuant to Attorney General Directive No. 2019-1.

C.34:15-31.16 Employer of first responders, 12 hours of paid confidential counseling.

2. a. An employer of first responders shall provide for up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the provisions of R.S.34:15-1 et seq. with a mental health professional to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course of the first responder's employment related to the first responder's experience of the critical incident. The counseling is in addition to, and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this subsection.

b. If a mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder's condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this section are required to be completed within one year after the first responder's first visit to a mental health professional.

d. The employer of the first responder shall not require the use of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to this section occurs during the first responder's established work hours.

C.34:15-31.17 Interactions between law enforcement officer and resiliency program officer, confidential.

3. Interactions related to mental health support between a law enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to disclose mental health support related communications with another law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law enforcement officer.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 21, 2025.

ASSEMBLY, No. 5792

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 16, 2025

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ROY FREIMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblywoman MITCHELLE DRULIS

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblyman DAN HUTCHISON

District 4 (Atlantic, Camden and Gloucester)

SYNOPSIS

Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/16/2025)

1 **AN ACT** concerning first responders and supplementing chapter 15
2 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. As used in this act:

8 “Critical incident” means an event involving the firing of a
9 weapon or an exchange of gun fire; serious bodily injury to or the
10 death of a minor; a terrorist act; a hostage situation; serious bodily
11 injury to or the death of another first responder employed in the
12 same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death
13 occurred in the performance of that first responder’s official duties;
14 a personal injury or wound; serious bodily injury received in the
15 performance of the first responder’s official duties; the visual or
16 audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible
17 witnessing of the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of
18 one or more persons; the response to or direct involvement in a
19 criminal investigation of an offense involving violent crimes against
20 minors; the need for rescue in the line of duty where one’s life was
21 in danger; or the response to or direct involvement in an
22 investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a minor.

23 “First responder” means a law enforcement officer or paid
24 firefighter.

25 “Law enforcement officer” means a person who is employed as a
26 sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement
27 agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those
28 governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection,
29 investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of
30 persons violating the criminal laws of the State.

31 “Mental health professional” means a licensed mental health
32 professional, who holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to
33 subsection a. of section 6 or subsection a. or d. of section 8 of
34 P.L.1991, c.134 (C.45:15BB-1 et seq.), who is culturally competent
35 in mental health issues related to first responders and specializes in
36 treating first responders related to critical incidents in law
37 enforcement and firefighting.

38 “Minor” means a person under the age of 18 years.

39 “Paid firefighter” or “firefighter” means a full-time paid
40 firefighter employed by a public fire department.

41 “Peer support team” means law enforcement officers trained by
42 culturally competent mental health professionals to provide
43 emotional and practical assistance to first responders.

44 “Public fire department” or “department” means any department
45 of a municipality, county, fire district or the State or any agency
46 thereof having employees engaged in firefighting provided that such
47 firefighting employees are included in a negotiating unit exclusively
48 comprised of firefighting employees.

1 “Resiliency program officer” means a designated law
2 enforcement
3 officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of
4 the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-
5 LE) within the officer’s employing agency, pursuant to Attorney
6 General Directive No. 2019-1.
7

8 2. a. An employer of first responders shall provide for up to 12
9 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the
10 provisions of R.S.34:15-1 et seq. with a mental health professional
11 to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course
12 of the first responder’s employment, related to the first responder’s
13 experience of the critical incident. The counseling is in addition to,
14 and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer
15 sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The
16 first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health
17 professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this
18 subsection.

19 b. If a mental health professional determines that the first
20 responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed
21 counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours
22 of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder’s
23 condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an
24 additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

25 c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this
26 section are required to be completed within one year after the first
27 responder’s first visit to a mental health professional.

28 d. The employer of the first responder shall not require the use
29 of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or
30 any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to
31 this section occurs during the first responder’s established work
32 hours.
33

34 3. Interactions related to mental health support between a law
35 enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of
36 a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program
37 officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to
38 disclose mental health support related communications with another
39 law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is
40 reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when
41 there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law
42 enforcement officer.
43

44 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires employers of first responders, including law enforcement officers and paid firefighters, to provide for workers' compensation coverage of counseling services in certain situations.

Under the bill, an employer of a first responder is required to provide for up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the provisions of the workers' compensation law, R.S.34:15-1 et seq., with a mental health professional to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course of the first responder's employment. The bill provides that the counseling would be in addition to, and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The bill also permits an eligible first responder to select a mental health professional to provide counseling.

The bill further provides that if a mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder's condition, the employing agency of the first responder is required to pay for up to an additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

All of the hours of counseling authorized under the bill are required to be completed within one year after the first responder's first visit to a mental health professional. The employing agency of the first is prohibited from requiring the use of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant occurs during the first responder's established work hours.

Under the bill, "critical incident" is defined to include events such as firing a weapon, being involved in an exchange of gun fire, receiving a serious bodily injury, witnessing certain serious bodily injuries and deaths, and being involved in certain investigations related to minors.

Additionally, the bill provides that interactions related to mental health support between a law enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to disclose mental health support related communications with another law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law enforcement officer.

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5792

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 16, 2025

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ROY FREIMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblywoman MITCHELLE DRULIS

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblyman DAN HUTCHISON

District 4 (Atlantic, Camden and Gloucester)

Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO

District 20 (Union)

Senator JOSEPH A. LAGANA

District 38 (Bergen)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Miller, Stanley, Assemblywomen Ramirez, McCoy, Murphy, Bagolie, Peterpaul, Donlon, Assemblyman Moen, Assemblywoman Simmons, Assemblyman Verrelli, Assemblywoman Swain, Assemblyman Tully, Senators Wimberly and Amato

SYNOPSIS

Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Labor Committee on June 16, 2025, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning first responders and supplementing chapter 15
2 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. As used in this act:

8 “Critical incident” means an event involving the firing of a
9 weapon or an exchange of gun fire; serious bodily injury to or the
10 death of a minor; a terrorist act; a hostage situation; serious bodily
11 injury to or the death of another first responder employed in the
12 same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death
13 occurred in the performance of that first responder’s official duties;
14 a personal injury or wound; serious bodily injury received in the
15 performance of the first responder’s official duties; the visual or
16 audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible
17 witnessing of the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of
18 one or more persons; the response to or direct involvement in a
19 criminal investigation of an offense involving violent crimes against
20 minors; the need for rescue in the line of duty where one’s life was
21 in danger; or the response to or direct involvement in an
22 investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a minor.

23 “First responder” means a ¹paid 9-1-1 first responder
24 dispatcher,¹ law enforcement officer ¹[or] ¹paid firefighter ¹, or
25 paid member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency,
26 ambulance, or rescue squad association, or any other individual
27 who, in the course of that individual's employment, is dispatched to
28 the scene of an emergency situation for the purpose of providing
29 medical care or other assistance¹.

30 “Law enforcement officer” means a person who is employed as a
31 sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement
32 agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those
33 governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection,
34 investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of
35 persons violating the criminal laws of the State.

36 “Mental health professional” means a licensed mental health
37 professional, who holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to
38 subsection a. of section 6 or subsection a. or d. of section 8 of
39 P.L.1991, c.134 (C.45:15BB-1 et seq.), who is culturally competent
40 in mental health issues related to first responders and specializes in
41 treating first responders related to critical incidents in law
42 enforcement and firefighting.

43 “Minor” means a person under the age of 18 years.

44 "Paid firefighter" or "firefighter" means a full-time paid
45 firefighter employed by a public fire department.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly ALA committee amendments adopted June 16, 2025.

1 “Peer support team” means law enforcement officers trained by
2 culturally competent mental health professionals to provide
3 emotional and practical assistance to first responders.

4 "Public fire department" or "department" means any department
5 of a municipality, county, fire district or the State or any agency
6 thereof having employees engaged in firefighting provided that such
7 firefighting employees are included in a negotiating unit exclusively
8 comprised of firefighting employees.

9 “Resiliency program officer” means a designated law
10 enforcement
11 officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of
12 the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-
13 LE) within the officer’s employing agency, pursuant to Attorney
14 General Directive No. 2019-1.

15
16 2. a. An employer of first responders shall provide for up to 12
17 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the
18 provisions of R.S.34:15-1 et seq. with a mental health professional
19 to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course
20 of the first responder’s employment, related to the first responder’s
21 experience of the critical incident. The counseling is in addition to,
22 and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer
23 sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The
24 first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health
25 professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this
26 subsection.

27 b. If a mental health professional determines that the first
28 responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed
29 counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours
30 of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder’s
31 condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an
32 additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

33 c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this
34 section are required to be completed within one year after the first
35 responder’s first visit to a mental health professional.

36 d. The employer of the first responder shall not require the use
37 of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or
38 any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to
39 this section occurs during the first responder’s established work
40 hours.

41
42 3. Interactions related to mental health support between a law
43 enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of
44 a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program
45 officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to
46 disclose mental health support related communications with another
47 law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is
48 reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when

1 there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law
2 enforcement officer.

3

4 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

ASSEMBLY LABOR COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5792

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 16, 2025

The Assembly Labor Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5792.

This bill, as amended, requires employers of first responders, including paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatchers, law enforcement officers, paid firefighters, and paid EMS responders, to provide for workers' compensation coverage of counseling services in certain situations.

Under the bill, an employer of a first responder is required to provide for up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the provisions of the workers' compensation law, R.S.34:15-1 et seq., with a mental health professional to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course of the first responder's employment. The bill provides that the counseling would be in addition to, and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The bill also permits an eligible first responder to select a mental health professional to provide counseling.

The bill further provides that if a mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder's condition, the employing agency of the first responder is required to pay for up to an additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

All of the hours of counseling authorized under the bill are required to be completed within one year after the first responder's first visit to a mental health professional. The employing agency of the first is prohibited from requiring the use of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant occurs during the first responder's established work hours.

Under the bill, "critical incident" is defined to include events such as firing a weapon, being involved in an exchange of gun fire, receiving a serious bodily injury, witnessing certain serious bodily injuries and deaths, and being involved in certain investigations related to minors.

Additionally, the bill provides that interactions related to mental health support between a law enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to disclose mental health support related communications with another law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law enforcement officer.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to expand the definition of “first responder” to include paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatchers and paid EMS responders, in addition to law enforcement officers and paid firefighters.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5792

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

DATED: JULY 2, 2025

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:**

Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.
- Type of Impact:**

Annual State and local expenditure increases.
- Agencies Affected:**

Public entities that employ first responders.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate
Local Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that the bill will result in an indeterminate annual increase in State and local expenditures related to counseling services for first responders involved in critical incidents.
- The OLS notes that the bill will also result in increased premiums for entities that purchase workers' compensation coverage.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires employers of first responders, including paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatchers, law enforcement officers, paid firefighters, and paid emergency medical services responders, to provide for workers’ compensation coverage of counseling services in certain situations.

Under the bill, an employer of a first responder is required to provide for up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the provisions of the workers’ compensation law with a mental health professional to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course of the first responder’s employment. The bill provides that the counseling would

be in addition to, and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The bill also permits an eligible first responder to select a mental health professional to provide counseling.

The bill further provides that if a mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder's condition, the employing agency of the first responder is required to pay for up to an additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

All of the hours of counseling authorized under the bill are required to be completed within one year after the first responder's first visit to a mental health professional. The employing agency of the first responder is prohibited from requiring the use of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled occurs during the first responder's established work hours.

Under the bill, "critical incident" is defined to include events such as firing a weapon, being involved in an exchange of gun fire, receiving a serious bodily injury, witnessing certain serious bodily injuries and deaths, and being involved in certain investigations related to minors.

Additionally, the bill provides that interactions related to mental health support between a law enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to disclose mental health support related communications with another law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law enforcement officer.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS finds that the bill will result in an indeterminate increase in State and local expenditures related to additional counseling services for first responders involved in critical incidents.

The bill provides for an initial allotment of 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under workers' compensation provisions. This counseling is in addition to any benefits provided by an employer health plan. If the mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional counseling, the bill provides for an additional 24 hours of paid professional counseling. These provisions of the bill will likely result in increased claims and costs for workers' compensation benefits. In order to estimate the expenditures for this program, the OLS would need to estimate the number of first responders who will qualify for the program, the average salary rate for first responders in the program, the average hourly rate for counseling services, along with the average duration in hours of each qualified instance. The OLS lacks the informational basis to make an accurate estimate on the State and local expenditures related to this program.

The OLS does not have access to independent actuarial information to analyze and determine the impact of projected claim increases on workers' compensation premium calculations and total costs. However, since a majority of public entities are self-insured for workers' compensation, any increases to the costs of workers' compensation will be funded directly by these entities.

In summary, although the OLS cannot quantify the cost of this legislation to the State and local public entities, it is likely that there will be an increase in the cost of workers' compensation claims to self-insured entities and in workers' compensation premiums for those entities that purchase coverage.

Section: Commerce, Labor and Industry
Analyst: John Gaudio
Associate Fiscal Analyst
Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

SENATE, No. 4590

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 5, 2025

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH A. LAGANA

District 38 (Bergen)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Wimberly

SYNOPSIS

Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/9/2025)

1 **AN ACT** concerning first responders and supplementing chapter 15
2 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. As used in this act:

8 “Critical incident” means an event involving the firing of a
9 weapon or an exchange of gun fire; serious bodily injury to or the
10 death of a minor; a terrorist act; a hostage situation; serious bodily
11 injury to or the death of another first responder employed in the
12 same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death
13 occurred in the performance of that first responder’s official duties;
14 a personal injury or wound; serious bodily injury received in the
15 performance of the first responder’s official duties; the visual or
16 audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible
17 witnessing of the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of
18 one or more persons; the response to or direct involvement in a
19 criminal investigation of an offense involving violent crimes against
20 minors; the need for rescue in the line of duty where one’s life was
21 in danger; or the response to or direct involvement in an
22 investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a minor.

23 “First responder” means a law enforcement officer or paid
24 firefighter.

25 “Law enforcement officer” means a person who is employed as a
26 sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement
27 agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those
28 governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection,
29 investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of
30 persons violating the criminal laws of the State.

31 “Mental health professional” means a licensed mental health
32 professional, who holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to
33 subsection a. of section 6 or subsection a. or d. of section 8 of
34 P.L.1991, c.134 (C.45:15BB-1 et seq.), who is culturally competent
35 in mental health issues related to first responders and specializes in
36 treating first responders related to critical incidents in law
37 enforcement and firefighting.

38 “Minor” means a person under the age of 18 years.

39 “Paid firefighter” or “firefighter” means a full-time paid
40 firefighter employed by a public fire department.

41 “Peer support team” means law enforcement officers trained by
42 culturally competent mental health professionals to provide
43 emotional and practical assistance to first responders.

44 “Public fire department” or “department” means any department
45 of a municipality, county, fire district or the State or any agency
46 thereof having employees engaged in firefighting provided that such
47 firefighting employees are included in a negotiating unit exclusively
48 comprised of firefighting employees.

1 “Resiliency program officer” means a designated law
2 enforcement
3 officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of
4 the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-
5 LE) within the officer’s employing agency, pursuant to Attorney
6 General Directive No. 2019-1.

7
8 2. a. An employer of first responders shall provide for up to 12
9 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the
10 provisions of R.S.34:15-1 et seq. with a mental health professional
11 to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course
12 of the first responder’s employment, related to the first responder’s
13 experience of the critical incident. The counseling is in addition to,
14 and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer
15 sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The
16 first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health
17 professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this
18 subsection.

19 b. If a mental health professional determines that the first
20 responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed
21 counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours
22 of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder’s
23 condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an
24 additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

25 c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this
26 section are required to be completed within one year after the first
27 responder’s first visit to a mental health professional.

28 d. The employer of the first responder shall not require the use
29 of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or
30 any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to
31 this section occurs during the first responder’s established work
32 hours.

33
34 3. Interactions related to mental health support between a law
35 enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of
36 a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program
37 officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to
38 disclose mental health support related communications with another
39 law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is
40 reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when
41 there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law
42 enforcement officer.

43
44 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires employers of first responders, including law enforcement officers and paid firefighters, to provide for workers' compensation coverage of counseling services in certain situations.

Under the bill, an employer of a first responder is required to provide for up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the provisions of the workers' compensation law, R.S.34:15-1 et seq., with a mental health professional to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course of the first responder's employment. The bill provides that the counseling would be in addition to, and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The bill also permits an eligible first responder to select a mental health professional to provide counseling.

The bill further provides that if a mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder's condition, the employing agency of the first responder is required to pay for up to an additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

All of the hours of counseling authorized under the bill are required to be completed within one year after the first responder's first visit to a mental health professional. The employing agency of the first is prohibited from requiring the use of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant occurs during the first responder's established work hours.

Under the bill, "critical incident" is defined to include events such as firing a weapon, being involved in an exchange of gun fire, receiving a serious bodily injury, witnessing certain serious bodily injuries and deaths, and being involved in certain investigations related to minors.

Additionally, the bill provides that interactions related to mental health support between a law enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to disclose mental health support related communications with another law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law enforcement officer.

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4590

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 5, 2025

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH A. LAGANA

District 38 (Bergen)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

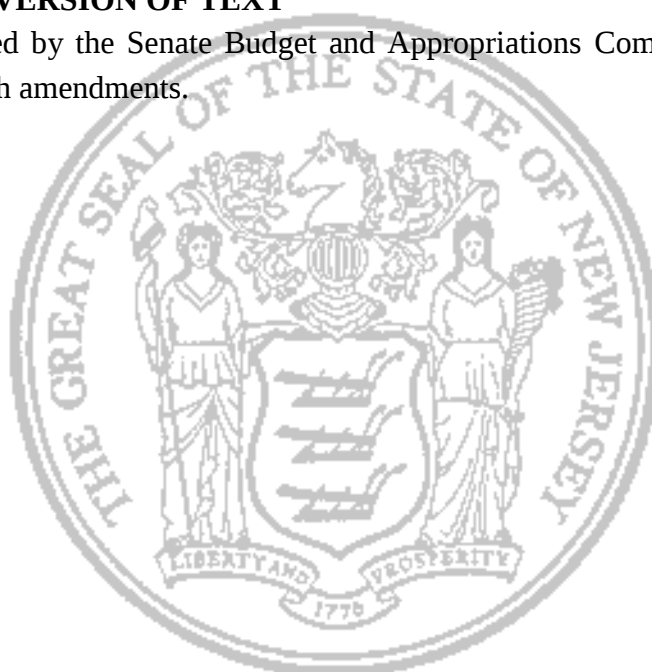
Senators Wimberly and Amato

SYNOPSIS

Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on June 26, 2025, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning first responders and supplementing chapter 15
2 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. As used in this act:

8 “Critical incident” means an event involving the firing of a
9 weapon or an exchange of gun fire; serious bodily injury to or the
10 death of a minor; a terrorist act; a hostage situation; serious bodily
11 injury to or the death of another first responder employed in the
12 same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death
13 occurred in the performance of that first responder’s official duties;
14 a personal injury or wound; serious bodily injury received in the
15 performance of the first responder’s official duties; the visual or
16 audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible
17 witnessing of the immediate aftermath of the death or maiming, of
18 one or more persons; the response to or direct involvement in a
19 criminal investigation of an offense involving violent crimes against
20 minors; the need for rescue in the line of duty where one’s life was
21 in danger; or the response to or direct involvement in an
22 investigation regarding the drowning or near drowning of a minor.

23 “First responder” means a ¹paid 9-1-1 first responder
24 dispatcher,¹ law enforcement officer ¹**[or]** ¹paid firefighter ¹, or
25 paid member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency,
26 ambulance, or rescue squad association, or any other individual
27 who, in the course of that individual's employment, is dispatched to
28 the scene of an emergency situation for the purpose of providing
29 medical care or other assistance¹.

30 “Law enforcement officer” means a person who is employed as a
31 sworn member of any State, county, or municipal law enforcement
32 agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those
33 governments who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection,
34 investigation, arrest, conviction, detention, or rehabilitation of
35 persons violating the criminal laws of the State.

36 “Mental health professional” means a licensed mental health
37 professional, who holds a current, valid license issued pursuant to
38 subsection a. of section 6 or subsection a. or d. of section 8 of
39 P.L.1991, c.134 (C.45:15BB-1 et seq.), who is culturally competent
40 in mental health issues related to first responders and specializes in
41 treating first responders related to critical incidents in law
42 enforcement and firefighting.

43 “Minor” means a person under the age of 18 years.

44 "Paid firefighter" or "firefighter" means a full-time paid
45 firefighter employed by a public fire department.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 26, 2025.

1 “Peer support team” means law enforcement officers trained by
2 culturally competent mental health professionals to provide
3 emotional and practical assistance to first responders.

4 “Public fire department” or “department” means any department
5 of a municipality, county, fire district or the State or any agency
6 thereof having employees engaged in firefighting provided that such
7 firefighting employees are included in a negotiating unit exclusively
8 comprised of firefighting employees.

9 “Resiliency program officer” means a designated law
10 enforcement
11 officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of
12 the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-
13 LE) within the officer’s employing agency, pursuant to Attorney
14 General Directive No. 2019-1.

15
16 2. a. An employer of first responders shall provide for up to 12
17 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the
18 provisions of R.S.34:15-1 et seq. with a mental health professional
19 to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course
20 of the first responder’s employment, related to the first responder’s
21 experience of the critical incident. The counseling is in addition to,
22 and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer
23 sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The
24 first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health
25 professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this
26 subsection.

27 b. If a mental health professional determines that the first
28 responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed
29 counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours
30 of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder’s
31 condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an
32 additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

33 c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this
34 section are required to be completed within one year after the first
35 responder’s first visit to a mental health professional.

36 d. The employer of the first responder shall not require the use
37 of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or
38 any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to
39 this section occurs during the first responder’s established work
40 hours.

41
42 3. Interactions related to mental health support between a law
43 enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of
44 a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program
45 officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to
46 disclose mental health support related communications with another
47 law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is
48 reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when

1 there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law
2 enforcement officer.

3

4 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4590

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 5, 2025

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH A. LAGANA

District 38 (Bergen)

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

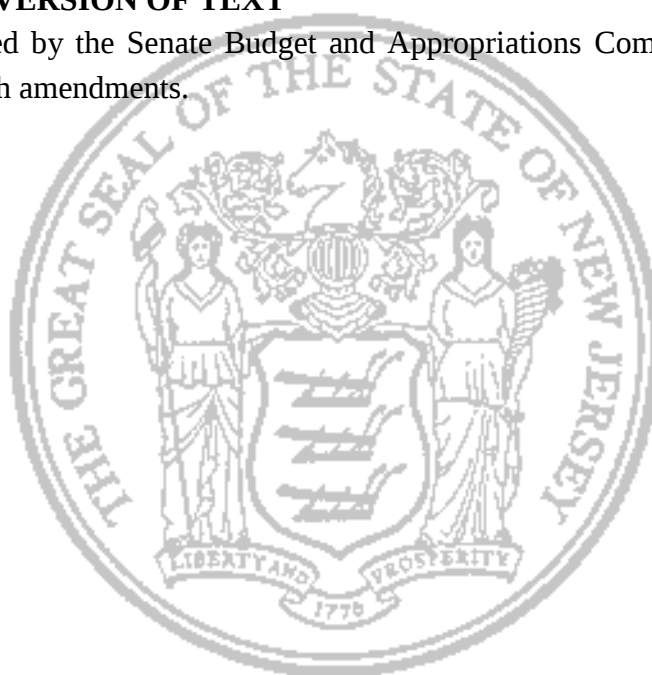
Senators Wimberly and Amato

SYNOPSIS

Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on June 26, 2025, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2025)

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12 same agency or unit, when that serious bodily injury or death
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16 audible witnessing of the death or maiming, or the visual or audible
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25 paid member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency,
26 ambulance, or rescue squad association, or any other individual
27 who, in the course of that individual's employment, is dispatched to
28 the scene of an emergency situation for the purpose of providing
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32 agency, department, division, or instrumentality of those
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45 firefighter employed by a public fire department.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
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Matter underlined thus is new matter.

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¹Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 26, 2025.

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10 enforcement
11 officer who is responsible for the training and implementation of
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24 first responder shall be authorized to select the mental health
25 professional who will conduct the counseling as provided by this
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27 b. If a mental health professional determines that the first
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29 counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours
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31 condition, the employer of the first responder shall pay for up to an
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33 c. All hours of licensed counseling authorized under this
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35 responder’s first visit to a mental health professional.

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37 of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or
38 any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant to
39 this section occurs during the first responder’s established work
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47 law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is
48 reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when

1 there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law
2 enforcement officer.

3

4 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 4590

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 26, 2025

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 4590.

As amended and reported, this bill requires employers of first responders, including paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatchers, law enforcement officers, paid firefighters, and paid EMS responders, to provide for workers' compensation coverage of counseling services in certain situations.

Under the bill, an employer of a first responder is required to provide for up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under the provisions of the workers' compensation law, R.S.34:15-1 et seq., with a mental health professional to a first responder who experiences a critical incident in the course of the first responder's employment. The bill provides that the counseling would be in addition to, and separate from, any benefits already provided by an employer sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. The bill also permits an eligible first responder to select a mental health professional to provide counseling.

The bill further provides that if a mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional hours of licensed counseling beyond the initial 12 hours and that the additional hours of licensed counseling are likely to improve the first responder's condition, the employing agency of the first responder is required to pay for up to an additional 24 hours of licensed counseling.

All of the hours of counseling authorized under the bill are required to be completed within one year after the first responder's first visit to a mental health professional. The employing agency of the first is prohibited from requiring the use of accrued annual or vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, or any other paid leave if a counseling session scheduled pursuant occurs during the first responder's established work hours.

Under the bill, "critical incident" is defined to include events such as firing a weapon, being involved in an exchange of gun fire, receiving a serious bodily injury, witnessing certain serious bodily injuries and deaths, and being involved in certain investigations related to minors.

Additionally, the bill provides that interactions related to mental health support between a law enforcement officer and a resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall be confidential. A resiliency program officer or a member of a peer support team shall not be required to disclose mental health support related communications with another law enforcement officer, except if the law enforcement officer is reasonably believed to be a risk to themselves or others or when there is evidence of the commission of a crime by the law enforcement officer.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to expand the definition of “first responder” to include paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatchers and paid EMS responders, in addition to law enforcement officers and paid firefighters.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) determines that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in State and local expenditures related to additional counseling services for first responders involved in critical incidents. The bill provides for an initial allotment of 12 hours of paid confidential counseling compensable under workers’ compensation provisions. This counselling is in addition to any benefits provided by an employer health plan. If the mental health professional determines that the first responder would benefit from additional counseling, the bill provides for an additional 24 hours of paid professional counseling. These provisions of the bill will likely result in increased claims and costs for workers’ compensation benefits. In order to estimate the expenditures for this program, the OLS would need to estimate the number of first responders who will qualify for the program, the average salary rate for first responders in the program, the average rate paid for counseling services, along with the average duration in hours of each qualified instance. The OLS lacks the informational basis to make an accurate estimate on the State and local expenditures related to this program.

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Takes Action on Legislation

Posted on - 08/21/2025

TRENTON – Today, Governor Murphy signed the following bills into law:

S-3773/A-5506 (Lagana, Wimberly/Verrelli) - Concerns requirements to report separations from employment under employee leasing agreements

S-3944/A-5125 (Sarlo, Gopal/Calabrese, Carter) - Provides that certain non-profit corporation alcoholic beverage theater licensees include disregarded entities of such corporations; allows certain community theaters to sell alcoholic beverages

S-3992/A-5844 (Singleton/Lopez, Stanley, McCoy) - Modifies capital reserve funding requirements for certain planned real estate developments

A-3424/S-1784 (Reynolds-Jackson, Matsikoudis/McKnight, Turner) - Establishes certain program requirements for school counselor certification; outlines role and duties of school counselor; requires professional development for school counselors; establishes position of School Counselor Liaison in DOE

A-5792/S-4590 (Freiman, Drulis, Hutchison, Quijano/Lagana, Scutari) - Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and provides that certain mental health related communications are confidential

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

[Administration](#)

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about\)](/governor/admin/about)

[Lt. Governor Tahesha Way \(/governor/admin/lt\)](/governor/admin/lt)

[In memoriam of Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt-sheila-y-oliver\)](/governor/admin/lt-sheila-y-oliver)

[Senior Staff \(/governor/admin/staff\)](/governor/admin/staff)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet\)](/governor/admin/cabinet)

[Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy \(/governor/climateaction/\)](/governor/climateaction/)

[Office of Equity \(/governor/admin/equity/\)](/governor/admin/equity/)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca\)](/governor/admin/bca)

[New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission \(https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/\)](https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

[Governor's Fellows Program \(/governor/admin/fellows\)](/governor/admin/fellows)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562024/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562024/approved/news_archive.shtml)

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
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Assemblywomen Donlon and Peterpaul Announce 13 Bills Signed Into Law This Summer

TINTON FALLS - The Governor signed 13 of Assemblywoman Margie Donlon and Assemblywoman Luanne Peterpaul's bills into law this summer.

Either Assemblywoman Donlon or Assemblywoman Peterpaul, or both, and Senator Vin Gopal, (D-Monmouth) were the prime sponsors of four of the bills and cosponsors of the remaining nine.

"Many of these bills support small businesses and protect consumers. They reflect the concerns that Legislative District 11 residents tell us are important to them, such as utility costs, as we travel around the district talking to businesses and residents," said Assemblywoman Peterpaul.



The bills on which the Assemblywomen were primary sponsors include A5768, which requires the BPU to revise community solar program targets and directs the agency to open registration by October 1, 2025 for an additional 3,000 megawatts of community solar projects. Senator Gopal was a primary sponsor of the Senate version. Another of their bills, A5141, establishes an historic distillery license to allow the manufacturing and consumption of distilled alcoholic beverages on-and-off premises under certain circumstances by a licensee on the NJ Register of Historic Places. Senator Gopal also was a primary sponsor.

"Our sponsored bills also address healthcare concerns, which are a top priority for the LD11 office, and ensure healthcare insurance is more accessible and affordable," said Donlon, who is a physician and primary sponsor of A5810, which promotes equity in the health insurance appeal process. "This bill eliminates fees for appeals against health insurance carriers that deny, reduce, or terminate benefits."

Assemblywoman Donlon and Senator Gopal also were primary sponsors of A5199, a new law that requires eligible resident and fellow physicians employed by Rutgers University, including University Hospital, and their dependents, receive coverage in the State Health Benefits Plan (SHBP) on the first day of employment.

"This legislation corrects a situation that resulted in these healthcare professionals working in hospital environments, where they are exposed to diseases, infections and other dangers, but didn't have health coverage for a period of time," Gopal said.

The LD11 legislators also cosponsored nine other bills that became the law since June 30 of this year. These bills include:

[A5792](#) - Provides for workers' compensation coverage of certain counseling services for first responders and ensures that mental health-related communications are confidential.

[A5687](#) - Establishes the "Next New Jersey Manufacturing Program" to incentivize in-state manufacturing investments and job creation.

[A5466](#) - Requires the BPU to study the effects of data centers on electricity costs.

[A5463](#) - Requires electric public utilities to submit an annual report on voting to the BPU.

[A5447](#) - Prohibits the sweepstakes model of wagering; establishes new penalties for unlawful gambling operations and practices; directs Division of Consumer Affairs and Division of Gaming Enforcement to enforce penalties.

[S4567](#) - Appropriates \$107,999,000 from constitutionally dedicated Corporate Business Tax revenues and various Green Acres funds to the DEP to make grants to local governments for open space acquisition, park development, and planning projects.

[S4476](#) - Permits awarding of contracts for certain preschool education services by resolution of the board of education; extends the maximum length of preschool education services contracts to three years. Senator Gopal was a primary sponsor in the Senate.

[S3910](#) - Makes various changes to the provision of preschool aid and facilities requirements; establishes Universal Preschool Implementation Steering Committee; requires full-day kindergarten in all school districts.

[S3711](#) - Makes annual allocations of \$500,000 from the Clean Communities Program Fund for public outreach concerning single-use plastics reduction programs permanent.

Posted on: September 16, 2025

Freiman and Drulis Bill to Expand Mental Health Protections for First Responders Signed into Law

Legislation ensures counseling services are covered and conversations remain confidential

(HILLSBOROUGH, NJ) — Legislation sponsored by Assemblyman [Roy Freiman](#) and Assemblywoman [Mitchelle Drulis](#), providing workers compensation coverage for certain counseling services for first responders, while ensuring confidentiality of mental health-related communications, was recently signed into law by Governor Murphy.

[A5792](#) recognizes the unique pressures faced by first responders and guarantees that counseling for trauma and other job-related mental health needs is both accessible and protected.



“First responders are there to assist us during our darkest moments. They carry the weight of what they witness long after the crisis has passed,” **said Assemblyman Freiman (D-Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset)**. “This law makes it clear that their mental health matters as much as their personal safety, by giving them the support they need to continue serving with strength and compassion.”

“Our firefighters, police officers, EMTs, and other first responders sacrifice so much for the safety of our communities,” **said Assemblywoman Mitchelle Drulis (D-Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset)**. “By guaranteeing coverage for counseling and keeping those conversations confidential, we are ensuring that help is always within reach. This is about rescuing the rescuers and honoring their service with the care they deserve.”

The law strengthens New Jersey’s commitment to the wellbeing of police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and other first responders who dedicate themselves to protecting communities across the state. The bill is also sponsored by Assemblyman Dan Hutchison and Assemblywoman Annette Quijano.

Posted on: September 5, 2025

Quijano Bill to Expand Mental Health Protections for First Responders Signed into Law

*Legislation ensures counseling services are covered
and conversations remain confidential*

(ELIZABETH, NJ) — Legislation sponsored by Assemblywoman [Annette Quijano](#) providing workers' compensation coverage for certain counseling services for first responders, while ensuring confidentiality of mental health-related communications, was recently signed into law by Governor Murphy.



Bill [A5792](#) recognizes the unique pressures faced by first responders and ensures that counseling for trauma and other job-related mental health needs are both accessible and protected.

“I am proud to support this bill, which marks a vital step in aiding the mental health of New Jersey’s best – our first responders,” **said Assemblywoman Quijano (D-Union)**. “They risk their lives daily to protect us and our well-being. The least we can do is safeguard them. This law recognizes the challenges of public safety work and guarantees our first responders have access to the care they need without obstacles or stigma.”

The legislation strengthens New Jersey’s commitment to the well-being of police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and other first responders who dedicate themselves to protecting communities across the state.

The new law mandates that an employer provide up to 12 hours of paid confidential counseling and an additional 24 hours if necessary, in addition to any benefits already provided by an employer-sponsored health plan or a group health insurance trust fund. Counseling can be scheduled during work hours, without use of leave or sick time.