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**REPORTS:** No

**HEARINGS:** No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:** Yes

“State will pay cost of counseling for wounded officers,” The Press, March 22, 2007, p.A6.

“State to cover mental care for injured cops,” Asbury Park Press, March 22, 2007, p. A3.

RWH 4-23-08

P.L. 2007, CHAPTER 59, *approved March 21, 2007*  
Senate, No. 1374 (*First Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** establishing a Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance  
2 Program and amending P.L.1998, c.149 **['**, and making an  
3 appropriation**']**<sup>1</sup>.  
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
6 of New Jersey:  
7

8 1. Section 1 of P.L.1998, c.149 (C.11A:2-25) is amended to read  
9 as follows:

10 1. a. The Commissioner of Personnel shall establish and  
11 maintain, on a 24-hour daily basis, a toll-free information "Law  
12 Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" telephone  
13 hotline. The hotline shall receive and respond to calls from law  
14 enforcement officers and sheriff's officers who have been involved  
15 in any event or incident which has produced personal or job-related  
16 depression, anxiety, stress, or other psychological or emotional  
17 tension, trauma, or disorder for the officer and officers who have  
18 been wounded in the line of duty. The operators of the hotline shall  
19 seek to identify those officers who should be referred to further  
20 debriefing and counseling services, and to provide such referrals.  
21 In the case of wounded officers, those services may include peer  
22 counseling, diffusing, debriefing, group therapy and individual  
23 therapy as part of a coordinated assistance program, to be known as  
24 the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program," designed  
25 and implemented by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of  
26 New Jersey's University Behavioral Healthcare Unit.

27 b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the  
28 commissioner and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be persons,  
29 who by experience or education, are: (1) familiar with post trauma  
30 disorders and the emotional and psychological tensions,  
31 depressions, and anxieties unique to law enforcement officers and  
32 sheriff's officers; or (2) trained to provide counseling services  
33 involving marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress  
34 management and other emotional or psychological disorders or  
35 conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the personal and  
36 professional well-being of a law enforcement officer and a sheriff's  
37 officer.

38 c. To ensure the integrity of the telephone hotline and to  
39 encourage officers to utilize it, the commissioner shall provide for  
40 the confidentiality of the names of the officers calling, the  
41 information discussed by that officer and the operator, and any  
42 referrals for further debriefing or counseling; provided, however,  
43 the commissioner may, by rule and regulation, (1) establish  
44 guidelines providing for the tracking of any officer who exhibits a

**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:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly ALP committee amendments adopted June 19, 2006.

1 severe emotional or psychological disorder or condition which the  
2 operator handling the call reasonably believes might result in harm  
3 to the officer or others and (2) establish a confidential registry of  
4 wounded New Jersey law enforcement officers.

5 (cf: P.L.1998, c.149, s.1)

6

7 '2. There is hereby appropriated to the Department of  
8 Personnel from the General Fund, \$80,000 to be used exclusively to  
9 defray the costs incurred by the University of Medicine and  
10 Dentistry of New Jersey's University Behavioral Healthcare Unit in  
11 providing the services. authorized under the "Blue Heart Law  
12 Enforcement Assistance Program." ]<sup>1</sup>

13

14 '[3.] 2.<sup>1</sup> This act shall take effect immediately.

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18

19 Establishes "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program"  
20 to provide counseling support for wounded law enforcement  
21 officers.

# SENATE, No. 1374

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 9, 2006

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator RONALD L. RICE**

**District 28 (Essex)**

**Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.**

**District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators Allen and Bucco**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program" to provide counseling support for wounded law enforcement officers; appropriates \$80,000.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/14/2006)**

S1374 RICE, MADDEN

2

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23 therapy as part of a coordinated assistance program, to be known as  
24 the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program," designed  
25 and implemented by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of  
26 New Jersey's University Behavioral Healthcare Unit.

27 b. The operators of the hotline shall be trained by the  
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5 (cf: P.L.1998, c.149, s.1)

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7 2. There is hereby appropriated to the Department of Personnel  
8 from the General Fund, \$80,000 to be used exclusively to defray the  
9 costs incurred by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New  
10 Jersey's University Behavioral Healthcare Unit in providing the  
11 services. authorized under the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement  
12 Assistance Program."

13

14 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

15

16

17

#### STATEMENT

18

19 This bill expands the "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis  
20 Intervention Services" toll-free hotline program to include a  
21 program designed specifically to provide counseling and support for  
22 law enforcement officers who have been wounded in the line of  
23 duty.

24 Under this new program, which is to be known as the "Blue  
25 Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program," wounded law  
26 enforcement officers could receive peer counseling, diffusing,  
27 debriefing, group therapy and individual therapy as part of a  
28 coordinated support program. The bill specifies that this new  
29 support program is to be designed and implemented by the  
30 University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's (UMDNJ)  
31 University Behavioral Healthcare unit.

32 In addition, the bill includes an \$80,000 appropriation to defray  
33 the costs incurred by UMDNJ's Behavioral Healthcare unit in  
34 providing the services authorized under the "Blue Heart Law  
35 Enforcement Assistance Program."

# ASSEMBLY LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **SENATE, No. 1374**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 19, 2006

The Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1374.

As amended and reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 1374 expands the "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" toll-free hotline program to include a program designed specifically to provide counseling and support for law enforcement officers who have been wounded in the line of duty.

Under this new program, which is to be known as the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program," wounded law enforcement officers could receive peer counseling, diffusing, debriefing, group therapy and individual therapy as part of a coordinated support program. The bill specifies that this new support program is to be designed and implemented by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's (UMDNJ) University Behavioral Healthcare unit. The bill also permits the Commissioner of Personnel to establish a confidential registry of wounded New Jersey law enforcement officers.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2878, as amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to remove the \$80,000 appropriation.



SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND VETERANS  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 1374**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MARCH 2, 2006

The Senate Law and Public Safety and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1374.

This bill expands the "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" toll-free hotline program to include a program designed specifically to provide counseling and support for law enforcement officers who have been wounded in the line of duty.

Under this new program, which is to be known as the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program," wounded law enforcement officers could receive peer counseling, diffusing, debriefing, group therapy and individual therapy as part of a coordinated support program. The bill specifies that this new support program is to be designed and implemented by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's (UMDNJ) University Behavioral Healthcare unit. The bill also permits the Commissioner of Personnel to establish a confidential registry of wounded New Jersey law enforcement officers.

In addition, the bill includes an \$80,000 appropriation to defray the costs incurred by UMDNJ's Behavioral Healthcare unit in providing the services authorized under the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program."

# ASSEMBLY, No. 2878

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 21, 2006

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman PETER J. BARNES, JR.**

**District 18 (Middlesex)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program" to provide counseling support for wounded law enforcement officers; appropriates \$80,000.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



A2878 BARNES

2

1 AN ACT establishing a Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance  
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3 appropriation.

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45 severe emotional or psychological disorder or condition which the

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3 wounded New Jersey law enforcement officers.

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5

6 2. There is hereby appropriated to the Department of Personnel  
7 from the General Fund, \$80,000 to be used exclusively to defray the  
8 costs incurred by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New  
9 Jersey's University Behavioral Healthcare Unit in providing the  
10 services. authorized under the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement  
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16 STATEMENT

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34 Enforcement Assistance Program."

# ASSEMBLY LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 2878

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 19, 2006

The Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2878.

Assembly Bill No. 2878 expands the "Law Enforcement Officer Crisis Intervention Services" toll-free hotline program to include a program designed specifically to provide counseling and support for law enforcement officers who have been wounded in the line of duty.

Under this new program, which is to be known as the "Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program," wounded law enforcement officers could receive peer counseling, diffusing, debriefing, group therapy and individual therapy as part of a coordinated support program. The bill specifies that this new support program is to be designed and implemented by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's (UMDNJ) University Behavioral Healthcare unit.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 1374, as amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to remove the \$80,000 appropriation.

## **Mar-21-07 Governor Signs Legislation Enhancing Counseling Support for Law Enforcement Officers Wounded in the Line of Duty**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DATE: March 21, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Anthony Coley  
Brendan Gilfillan – 609-777-2600

### **GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION ENHANCING COUNSELING SUPPORT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WOUNDED IN THE LINE OF DUTY**

**TRENTON** – Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed legislation establishing the Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program to provide counseling support for wounded law enforcement officers.

“New Jersey’s law enforcement officers have made the choice to shoulder the risk and responsibility that comes with the job of protecting our state and its people,” Governor Jon S. Corzine said. “We must make it our responsibility to ensure that these officers get the proper counseling care and support that they need if they are wounded in the course of performing that task.”

The bill expands an existing law enforcement officer crisis intervention services program that is maintained by the Department of Personnel to include law enforcement officers wounded in the line of duty. The bill gives the program authority to refer participants to group therapy, peer counseling, and debriefing. Additionally, the legislation authorizes the Personnel Commissioner to develop rules and regulations to establish a confidential registry of wounded officers. The legislation takes effect immediately.

The legislation (S1374/A2878) was sponsored in the Senate by Senators Ron Rice (D-Essex) and Fred Madden (D-Camden/Gloucester). It was sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblypersons Peter J. Barnes (D-Middlesex), Jeff Van Drew (D-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Linda Greenstein (D-Mercer/Middlesex).

“Without question, the job of a law enforcement officer can be dangerous, and sometimes these brave men and women are injured on the job,” said Senator Rice, D-Essex. “The road to recovery can be a painful, confusing and perhaps frightening one, but it can more easily be navigated with help from their own.

These law enforcement officers risked their own lives for us, and we need to see that they are taken care of and given all the help needed to fully recover. The new program will provide wounded law enforcement officers with peer counseling, debriefing, and therapy as part of a coordinated support plan."

"As it stands today, the 24-hour toll-free crisis hotline receives calls from law enforcement and sheriff's officers who have been involved in any incident that caused depression, anxiety, stress, emotional trauma, or disorder for the officer," said Senator Madden, D-Camden and Gloucester. "The operators who will answer the calls will be trained in counseling services and provide referrals to officers who need further counseling services. It's important that we provide counseling for wounded officers because there comes a time when people need a place to turn for help in overcoming tragedy."

"The services the 'Blue Heart Law Enforcement Assistance Program' will provide are essential to helping law enforcement personnel cope with the physical and mental trauma associated with being wounded in the line of duty," said Assemblyman Barnes, Jr. (D-Middlesex), chairman of the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee and a retired FBI special agent.

"First responders who are trained to lay their lives on the line to protect the public's safety will now have someplace to turn when they themselves are the ones in jeopardy," said Assemblyman Van Drew (D-Atlantic).

"The people who work every day to protect our lives now have a safety net to help protect theirs when injuries received in the line of fire become too much to handle alone," said Assemblywoman Greenstein (D-Middlesex).