

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 482

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION relative to confidentiality in counseling first responders.

WHEREAS, there are many tragic statistics that speak to the dangers inherent in serving as a police officer, firefighter, corrections officer or emergency medical technician (EMT); and

WHEREAS, 2010 saw 160 police officers killed in the line of duty, an increase of 37% over 2009, and that number promises to increase again in 2011; and

WHEREAS, recent statistics reveal that corrections officers commit suicide at over double the rate of police officers, and that police officer deaths by suicide are four times more likely than in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, firefighter deaths spiked in 2001 as the result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, with 343 firefighters being killed in New York and another 105 dying in the line of duty across the United States; and

WHEREAS, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among firefighters and EMTs can be as high as 38%, depending on the intensity of the death and injury they witness; and

WHEREAS, the rates of divorce, alcohol addiction, and substance abuse among law enforcement officers, firefighters, and corrections officers are far above the norm and exceed that of other professions; and

WHEREAS, these Homeland Heroes daily protect and serve their fellow citizens, often risking their lives to save others and unfortunately, sometimes sacrificing their own lives in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, a non-profit organization, Serve & Protect was founded by Robert Michaels to address the emotional and spiritual needs of law enforcement officers, firefighters, corrections officers, EMTs, and their families; and

WHEREAS, through Safe Call Now, Serve & Protect provides crisis intervention services to these Homeland Heroes, always working to save lives, restore families, educate with options, and preserve dignity and honor for these dedicated professionals; and

WHEREAS, as in all types of counseling and intervention, confidentiality is key in providing these essential services to first responders who are in emotional, mental or spiritual crisis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this General Assembly salutes the exemplary work of Robert Michaels and his staff in founding and operating Serve & Protect to serve "The Heart Of Those Who Protect" by providing emotional and spiritual support and crisis intervention for law enforcement officers, firefighters, corrections officers, and emergency medical technicians.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is the sense of this General Assembly that chaplains counseling first responders should have the same protection of confidentiality that pastors are afforded when providing crisis intervention services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.