

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8493

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish an interagency working group on peer-to-peer behavioral health programs for law enforcement officers and first responders, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 23, 2026

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM (for himself, Mr. ALFORD, and Mr. RUTHERFORD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish an interagency working group on peer-to-peer behavioral health programs for law enforcement officers and first responders, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Peer Support for Our
3 First Responders Act of 2026”.

4 **SEC. 2. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON PEER-TO-PEER**
5 **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR LAW**
6 **ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND FIRST RE-**
7 **SPONDERS.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Health and
9 Human Services shall establish an interagency working
10 group to—

11 (1) review best practices for peer-to-peer behav-
12 ioral health programs that are tailored to law en-
13 forcement officers and first responders; and

14 (2) issue updated recommendations to Congress
15 on ways to improve mental and behavioral health
16 outcomes for law enforcement officers and first re-
17 sponders, including ways of reducing suicide risk
18 and addressing substance use conditions.

19 (b) REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES.—In conducting
20 the review under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall—

21 (1) ensure that peer-to-peer behavioral health
22 programs are evaluated for distinct occupational
23 models given the unique operational environments,
24 exposures, and experiences; and

25 (2) include best practices relating to—
26 (A) confidentiality protections;

1 (B) training standards for peer supporters;
2 and

3 (C) integration of services with licensed
4 mental and behavioral health professionals.

5 (c) MEMBERS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The working group shall be
7 composed of the following members:

8 (A) The Secretary.

9 (B) The Attorney General.

10 (C) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

11 (D) Representatives of Federal, State,
12 Tribal, territorial, and local government agen-
13 cies employing law enforcement officers and
14 first responders, to be appointed by the Sec-
15 retary.

16 (E) Law enforcement officers and first re-
17 sponders, to be appointed by the Secretary, in-
18 cluding law enforcement officers and first re-
19 sponders with direct experience participating in
20 peer-to-peer behavioral health programs.

21 (F) Representatives of nongovernmental
22 organizations, including organizations that sup-
23 port the interests of law enforcement officers
24 and first responders, to be appointed by the
25 Secretary.

1 (2) BALANCED REPRESENTATION.—In appoint-
2 ing members under paragraph (1), the Secretary
3 shall seek to achieve a membership that represents
4 a variety of viewpoints across agencies, organiza-
5 tions, and experience levels.

6 (d) PUBLICATION REQUIREMENT; REPORT TO CON-
7 GRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of enact-
8 ment of this Act, the working group shall—

9 (1) make publicly available on the internet
10 website of the Department of Health and Human
11 Services a report detailing the results of the review
12 to be conducted under subsection (a)(1), including—

13 (A) a compilation of evidence-based find-
14 ings; and

15 (B) an identification of minimum stand-
16 ards for effective peer-to-peer behavioral health
17 programs for law enforcement officers and first
18 responders; and

19 (2) submit to Congress a report containing the
20 updated recommendations to be issued under sub-
21 section (a)(2), including recommendations on—

22 (A) how peer-to-peer behavioral health pro-
23 grams for law enforcement officers and first re-
24 sponders should function as a part of the

1 broader continuum of behavioral health care;
2 and

3 (B) opportunities for providing Federal
4 grant guidance, technical assistance, and inter-
5 agency coordination to support implementation
6 of effective peer-to-peer behavioral health pro-
7 grams.

8 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) FIRST RESPONDER.—The term “first re-
10 sponder” includes firefighters, emergency medical
11 services personnel, public safety telecommunicators,
12 corrections public safety personnel, and such other
13 emergency response personnel as determined appro-
14 priate by the Secretary.

15 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
16 means, unless otherwise indicated, the Secretary of
17 Health and Human Services, acting through the As-
18 sistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance
19 Use.

20 (f) TERMINATION.—The working group shall termi-
21 nate on the date that is one year after the date on which
22 the working group complies with the requirements of sub-
23 section (d).

24 (g) EVALUATION OF NEED FOR UPDATING REC-
25 OMMENDATIONS.—Following the termination date estab-

1 lished by subsection (f), the Secretary may submit to Con-
2 gress a request to reconvene the working group if the Sec-
3 retary determines that there is a need to further—

4 (1) update recommendations on ways to im-
5 prove mental health outcomes for law enforcement
6 officers and first responders; or

7 (2) review best practices for peer-to-peer behav-
8 ior health programs that are tailored to law enforce-
9 ment officers and first responders.

10 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
12 necessary to carry out this section.

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