



CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION

My name is Andrew Matthews, and I am the President of the Connecticut State Police Union. Our Union represents approximately 1,089 State Troopers, Sergeants and Master Sergeants. I am submitting this letter on behalf of all our Union members in *SUPPORT* of:

RAISED HOUSE BILL 5533 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

The Connecticut State Police Union membership takes great pride in protecting all Connecticut citizens and visitors however; many times it comes at a significant personal sacrifice. Often Police Officers are forced to witness alarming scenes that will forever live in their minds and will have a negative impact on their day to day work related duties. Together, we not only have a responsibility to relieve any physical and/or financial distress an employee experiences as a result of workplace violence, but we must also prevent any abuses of these protections. Connecticut law currently excludes certain types of mental or emotional impairments resulting from personnel actions, including but not limited to transfers, promotions, demotions and/or terminations.

The Connecticut State Police responds to many critical and deadly situations with unwavering courage, leadership, strength and professionalism. State Troopers (both on and off duty) witness unconscionable act of violence where victims are maimed, mutilated and seriously disfigured at crime scenes. Sometimes, these events cause emotional wounds that are not visible, but can be healed with the right treatment.

Unfortunately, current law does not protect those employees that are mentally or emotionally injured as a result of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The State Police Union believes that any injury arising out of and in the course of our employment should be covered by Workman's compensation benefits. PTSD has the potential to occur after exposure to critical incidents or traumatic/shocking events. There is little doubt that there are employees who are suffering, will continue to suffer from PTSD in the future as a result of the traumatic workplace events.

This legislation is not only fair, but provides limited circumstance to qualify and it reduces the potential for abuse. It also sends a clear message of support from our Connecticut legislators and it would be the first step in protecting against our employees not being cared for and it will ensure that they receive the proper treatment they need and deserve.

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President, Connecticut State Police Union