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PRESIDENT RICHARD HOLTON
Office of The President

Statement of

The Hartford Police Union

To the

Public Safety & Security Committee

In Support of Raised Bill No. 5533

My name is Richard Holton, President of the Hartford Police Union, representing men and women who unselfishly serve the residents of Hartford putting their own safety and lives on the line to keep the Capitol City safe and enjoyable. The Hartford Police Union supports HB 5533.

While keeping the city safe, my members, your front line protection, are assaulted, injured and see some of the most horrific things the rest of society wishes to never see. Under the current law if an individual is injured in the course of their duties they are covered by the Workers Compensation Act, if they used deadly force against another individual they are covered by the current law but one thing the law does not cover is PTSD, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, in a non-deadly-force encounter, such as a traumatic event.

The current law covers visible injuries and scaring that you can see due to a work related incident but they forget about the invisible/silent scar that you can't see that effects first responders, and that's PTSD. When an officer personally and physically experiences the carnage at a murder scene or a fatal accident those images never leave their memory.

I can personally attest to a Motor vehicle accident I responded to, the victim was struck by a vehicle that was going at a high rate of speed knocking her out of her clothes and killing her and destroying a family. I can still to this day close my eyes and see and hear the whole scene, from a citizen telling me and showing me the victims leg on the sidewalk and the rest of her near naked body approx. 40 feet away. As I went to render aid to the victim I can still hear her gurgling for air and bright red blood coming from her mouth and her other leg hanging on by a few flaps of skin.

The reason I tell you this story is because there are incidents that never leave your memory and have a profound effect on an individual. Whether it is an incident like Sandy Hook, Columbine, Aurora, or a scene as I described above they all have an effect on the human brain and leaves an imprint that will never go away. PTSD is real and it effects every first responder; I urge you to pass HB 5533. Thank you.

Sergeant Richard Holton
Hartford Police Union Vice President