



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

**REPRESENTATIVE TERRIE WOOD**  
ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FIRST DISTRICT

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**ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN LEADER**

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**MEMBER**  
REGULATION REVIEW COMMITTEE  
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE  
GENERAL BONDING SUBCOMMITTEE

March 4, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srvinavasan and other members of the Public Health Committee. I am speaking in **support of HB 5912 An Act Concerning Training in Mental Health First Aid for Emergency Services Personnel.**

Two years ago, in the wake of the school shooting in Newtown, there was an increase in awareness of mental and behavioral health issues. A major part of the resulting legislation was to increase education about mental health and help de-stigmatize how mental illness is perceived. It is vitally important to continue to raise awareness and educate the public on these issues. This is particularly important for those working directly with the public.

Mental Health First Aid is a nationally certified, evidenced based 8 hour public education course currently being offered throughout Connecticut and the country. We have many qualified and excellent MHFA trainers in Connecticut. This course is similar to the regular First Aid course many of us have taken at some point in our lives. How to help someone in need of fast care.

Many EMS first responders, teachers, firefighters, police officers, librarians and others have taken this course. While it is of benefit to anyone to take the course it is of particular benefit to those who serve in a public capacity. It is incumbent on all of us to learn as much as we can about mental/behavioral health to not only help destigmatize the illness but also to be able to help someone who is in immediate need of mental health support.

Currently, the requirement for mental health training is 3 hours of education during the regular 150 hour EMT Course. Further training every 3-5 years, for latest and best practices in the mental health field would serve the public good in a most positive way.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Terrie Wood  
State Representative  
141<sup>st</sup> District  
Norwalk, and Darien