

# Public Safety and Security Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-342

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
BETWEEN PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS AND DEPARTMENT OF

**Title:** CORRECTION OFFICERS.

**Vote Date:** 3/19/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/7/2024

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.  
Rep. Kurt Vail, 52nd Dist.  
Rep. Michael DiGiovancarlo, 74th Dist.  
Rep. Michael D Quinn, 82nd Dist.  
Rep. Greg S. Howard, 43rd Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill provides confidentiality for communications between peer support team members and Department of Correction officers. Currently, these communications are not confidential and subject to disclosure.

This peer support group is a means for combating the effects of stress and trauma that staff working in public safety often face on a day-to-day basis. This is a voluntary program, so without confidentiality it is thought that many public service workers would not utilize this program which may lead to potential mental health risks.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Sharonda Carlos, Deputy Commissioner, CT Department of Correction, Supports:**

The Department of Correction believes that the peer support program is the single most effective and impactful step taken by the Department to further support staff health and wellness. The Department's peer support program has proven to be helpful and successful in assisting staff through personal and professional struggles. The EAU program's demonstrated success in dealing with these difficulties they believe has saved lives. Confidentiality is the most important aspect of the EAU program, giving individuals private,

confidential, support for personal and or job-related issues. The willingness of staff to either participate or to seek help is often contingent upon the expectation that their personal concerns, challenges and struggles will be held confidential. With this bill the Department of Corrections is seeking those protection already owned by first responders.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Dianne Moynihan, Behavioral Health Clinical Director, Connecticut Department of Correction, Supports:**

Expresses how essential it is that our peer support specialists be protected and offered the highest legal and ethical privacy possible. Anything less will erode and compromise the integrity of our program by deterring our co-workers to come forward seeking the help and support they are entitled to for doing one of the most dangerous public safety jobs. All other public safety peer support programs are afforded this essential protection.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**None Expressed.**

**Reported by: Casey Urso (Assistant Clerk)**

**Date: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**