

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1505

4
5 By: Representative Wing
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For An Act To Be Entitled

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9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING PUBLIC SAFETY
10 EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A TRAUMATIC EVENT; TO
11 OFFER LICENSED COUNSELING TO PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES
12 WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A TRAUMATIC EVENT; TO REQUIRE A
13 PUBLIC EMPLOYER TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR LICENSED
14 COUNSELING FOR A PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEE WHO HAS
15 EXPERIENCED A TRAUMATIC EVENT; AND FOR OTHER
16 PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

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20 TO REQUIRE A PUBLIC EMPLOYER TO OFFER
21 AND PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR LICENSED
22 COUNSELING FOR A PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEE
23 WHO HAS EXPERIENCED A TRAUMATIC EVENT.
24

25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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27 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 21, Chapter 5, Subchapter 1, is amended
28 to add an additional section to read as follows:

29 21-5-112. Coverage for licensed counseling for traumatic event –
30 Definitions.

31 (a) As used in this section:

32 (1) “Firefighter” means a person who is a:

33 (A) Paid, full-time member of a fire department or
34 firefighting unit of a public employer and who actively engages in the
35 fighting of fires on a regular basis;

36 (B) Paid, full-time instructor of the Arkansas Fire



1 Training Academy; or
 2 (C) Member of the firefighting organization of the:
 3 (i) Arkansas National Guard Robinson Maneuver
 4 Training Center; or
 5 (ii) Arkansas National Guard Fort Chaffee Joint
 6 Maneuver Training Center;
 7 (2) "Licensed counseling" means counseling provided by a
 8 licensed mental health professional;
 9 (3) "Licensed mental health professional" means an individual
 10 who:
 11 (A) Is a licensed:
 12 (i) Psychiatrist;
 13 (ii) Psychologist;
 14 (iii) Mental health professional who holds either a
 15 master's degree or a doctoral degree related to the mental health profession;
 16 (iv) Advanced practice registered nurse working
 17 within the scope of his or her practice as a mental health nurse practitioner
 18 or a mental health clinical nurse; or
 19 (v) Psychiatric physician assistant working under
 20 the supervision of a licensed physician;
 21 (B) Specializes in trauma and crisis; and
 22 (C) Uses evidence-based treatment options;
 23 (4) "Police officer" means a paid, full-time:
 24 (A) Law enforcement officer engaged in official duty who
 25 is a member of:
 26 (i) A regular police force;
 27 (ii) The Division of Arkansas State Police; or
 28 (iii) The law enforcement organization of the:
 29 (a) Arkansas National Guard Robinson Maneuver
 30 Training Center; or
 31 (b) Arkansas National Guard Fort Chaffee Joint
 32 Maneuver Training Center;
 33 (B) Sheriff or deputy sheriff of a county in this state
 34 who is engaged in official duty; or
 35 (C) Constable or night marshal of a town in this state who
 36 is engaged in official duty;

1 (5) “Public employer” means the state, a political subdivision
2 of the state, or a city of the first class, a city of the second class, or an
3 unincorporated town of the state;

4 (6) “Public safety employee” means an employee of a public
5 employer who is a:

6 (A) Probation officer;

7 (B) Surveillance officer;

8 (C) Adult or juvenile detention officer;

9 (D) Police officer; or

10 (E) Firefighter; and

11 (7) “Traumatic event” means a public safety employee’s exposure
12 in the line of duty to an incident involving:

13 (A) The extraordinary traumatic bodily injury or death of
14 a person;

15 (B) The serious injury, death, abuse, or exploitation of a
16 minor;

17 (C) An immediate threat to the life of the public safety
18 employee or another person; or

19 (D) A mass casualties event.

20 (b)(1) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, a public
21 employer that employs a public safety employee shall provide coverage for
22 licensed counseling for a public safety employee who has experienced a
23 traumatic event.

24 (2)(A) The coverage required under subdivision (b)(1) of this
25 section shall include coverage for a public safety employee to participate in
26 up to twelve (12) licensed counseling visits in a calendar year in which the
27 public safety employee experiences a traumatic event, regardless of the
28 number of traumatic events experienced by the public safety employee during
29 the calendar year.

30 (B)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (b)(2)(B)(ii) of
31 this section, if a public safety employee begins receiving licensed
32 counseling for which coverage is required under this section on or after July
33 1 in a year, any licensed counseling visits to which the public safety
34 employee is entitled under this section that the public safety employee does
35 not use before the end of the calendar year may be carried over to the
36 following calendar year.

1 (ii) A public safety employee shall not receive more
2 than eighteen (18) covered licensed counseling visits under this section in a
3 calendar year.

4 (C) Licensed counseling allowed under this section may be
5 provided through telehealth.

6 (c)(1)(A) A public employer shall pay for all licensed counseling
7 allowed under this section.

8 (B) A public employer shall pay a licensed mental health
9 professional an amount not to exceed the deductibles and conditions under the
10 public safety employee's current health benefit plan.

11 (C) A public safety employee shall provide documentation
12 to substantiate the amount billed to the public safety employee for licensed
13 counseling under the public safety employee's current health benefit plan.

14 (2) Payment by a public employer for licensed counseling under
15 this section does not create a presumption that a claim is compensable under
16 § 11-9-113 or § 11-9-114.

17 (d)(1) Except as provided in subdivision (d)(2) of this section, a
18 public employer shall allow a public safety employee to select the licensed
19 mental health professional who will provide the licensed counseling allowed
20 under this section.

21 (2) If a licensed mental health professional declines to provide
22 licensed counseling to a public safety employee under this section, the
23 public employer that employs the public safety employee is not required to
24 secure the services of that licensed mental health professional.

25 (e) A public employer may satisfy the requirements of this section
26 through its creation of or participation in a program that:

27 (1) Provides licensed counseling that meets the requirements of
28 this section; and

29 (2) Requires the public employer to provide coverage for
30 licensed counseling as required under this section.

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