



State: Fla.

PTSD Bill Advances to Senate Committee: SOUTH [2017-11-29]

The Senate Banking and Insurance Committee next week will discuss legislation that would award first responders indemnity benefits for mental-mental claims for injuries such as post-traumatic stress disorder.



Sen. Lauren Book

The committee meeting will be held from 10 a.m.-noon Tuesday in the Toni Jennings Committee Room of the 110 Senate Office Building in Tallahassee.

SB 376, by Sen. Lauren Book, D-Plantation, would use a "clear and convincing" evidentiary standard and would require certain conditions for first responders to receive indemnity benefits.

Police, firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians would have to witness a murder, suicide, fatal injury or child death, or arrive on a scene where mass casualties were suffered.

In addition, the first responder would have to have begun mental health treatment within 15 days of the incident and meet the criteria for PTSD as described in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

Claimants' attorneys object to the tight deadline, contending that often symptoms don't appear until long after the traumatic experience.

Current Florida law allows only reimbursement of medical costs for first responders who can prove PTSD or other mental injuries with clear and convincing evidence. Book's bill would keep the same evidentiary standard but place conditions on first responders to receive lost wages.