



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1041-2019, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1041

Resolution declaring the third week in May of each year to be recognized as First Responder Mental Health Awareness Week.

By Council Members Borelli, Kallos, Holden, Cohen and Deutsch

Whereas, According to the United States Department of Homeland Security, an estimated 4.6 million career and volunteer firefighters, police, emergency medical technicians, and paramedic workers serve communities all across the nation; and

Whereas, There are currently more than 11,000 New York City Fire Department (“FDNY”) uniformed personnel and more than 36,500 uniformed New York City Police Officers (“NYPD”) personnel serving the City of New York; and

Whereas, Firefighters, emergency medical service providers, law enforcement and rescue personnel routinely face situations that can impact their behavioral health, which may result in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, stress, anxiety, addiction, suicidal thoughts, depression, and/or burnout; and

Whereas, Recently, New York City has unfortunately seen a sharp rise in first responder suicides, specifically involving members of the NYPD; and

Whereas, According to Blue H.E.L.P., a nonprofit organization that tracks law enforcement suicide, as of August 1, 2019, reported law enforcement suicides were up 24% this year over last during the same period; and

Whereas, The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that police officers are far more likely to die from suicide than from line-of-duty homicide, and that nearly one in four police officers has suicidal thoughts at some point during their lives; and

Whereas, Emergency medical service personnel can be exposed to a variety of work related stressors that may range from critical incidents associated with the provision of patient care to chronic work-related problems such as being assaulted by emotionally disturbed patients; and

Whereas, The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene recommends that community organizations work to reduce suicide risk by encouraging individuals to seek help, dispelling misconceptions about mental illnesses, and reducing social isolation among those struggling with depression; and

Whereas, Mental Health Month was established in 1949 and has since been observed annually throughout the United States; and

Whereas, Mental Health Month helps bring attention to the needs of those living with mental illness and promotes the overall mental health of all Americans; and

Whereas, New York City should create better awareness and more programs for first responders, such as those individuals in the NYPD and FDNY who suffer from mental health related issues; and

Whereas, The third week of Mental Health Month should be dedicated to first responders in an effort to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support first responders with a diagnosed mental illness as well as provide support to their families; and

Whereas, The third week of Mental Health Month should be called *First Responder Mental Health Awareness Week* in honor and recognition of those in law enforcement, emergency medical services and firefighting who are battling mental illness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declares the third week in May of each year to be recognized as First Responder Mental Health Awareness Week.

WJH
LS 11429
8/21/19