

CITY OF BETHLEHEM

City Council Memorandum

SUBJECT: Resolution Supporting House Bill 432, amending the Worker's Compensation Act by providing for compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Injury for First Responders

TO: Members of Council

FROM: Grace Crampsie Smith, Member of Council

DATE: May14, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Attached is a proposed resolution in support of Pennsylvania General Assembly House Bill 432, amending the Worker's Compensation Act by providing for compensation for post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) for first responders.

Currently, employees of the City of Bethlehem are covered under the Pennsylvania Workman's Compensation Act for PTSI with the exception of firefighters, police, and EMS workers. However, these critical City employees are frequently subjected to traumatic and stressful situations and are at high risk of suffering from PTSI, especially in the context of the COVID-19 emergency. First responders suffering from PTSI often go unreported and untreated potentially leading to long term and permanent disability or in extreme cases, suicide.

First responders witness people and their families as they experience the worst moments of their lives and this can trigger mental health problems. Other times, work-related psychological conditions result from cumulative exposure to trauma. Post-traumatic injuries cause real harm that we need to recognize and we need to use the workers' compensation system to assist our first responders in addressing that trauma.

Covering City of Bethlehem first responders for PTSI under the Pennsylvania Workman's Compensation Act will help prevent first responder suicides and other adverse health outcomes. Moreover, providing our first responders with coverage for PTSI makes good financial sense for the City.

I would ask the Members of Council to please consider the attached resolution at the May 19, 2020 City Council meeting.



Grace Crampsie Smith, Member Council

CC: R. Donchez, Mayor

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-

Resolution Supporting HB 432, amending the Worker's Compensation Act by providing for compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Injury for First Responders

WHEREAS, All employees of the City of Bethlehem are covered under the Pennsylvania Workman's Compensation Act for **Post-Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI)** with the exception of Firefighters, Police, and EMS; and

WHEREAS, First Responders suffering from **PTSI** often go unreported and untreated thus leading to long term and permanent disability or in extreme cases, suicide; and

WHEREAS, Treating Bethlehem First Responders for **PTSI**, in accordance with **Pennsylvania House Bill 432** and subsequent amendments, and other injuries are treated under the Pennsylvania Workman's Compensation Act, will help avert First Responder suicide as well as alleviate long term and permanent disabilities which add unwanted and unproductive costs to the City of Bethlehem.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Bethlehem City Council stands with the City's First Responders by Supporting **Pennsylvania House Bill 432** and subsequent amendments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Bethlehem City Council expresses gratitude to our State Representative Jeanne McNeill for having become a co-sponsor of House Bill 432.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to State Senator Lisa Boscola and Representatives Jeanne McNeill, and Steve Samuelson.

Sponsored by _____

ADOPTED by Council this day of , 2020.

President of Council

ATTEST:

City Clerk