

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 621

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5 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ALLOWING A LOCAL FIRST RESPONDER ENTITY TO
6 ESTABLISH A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF A LOCAL
7 FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM; AND PROHIBITING A QUALIFIED PEER SUPPORTER
8 FROM TESTIFYING ABOUT THE CONTENT OF A PEER SUPPORT SESSION."

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10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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12 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Local first responder peer support programs.** (1) A police department,
13 sheriff's office, fire department, or emergency medical service provider may establish a first responder peer
14 support program that is in compliance with the provisions of this section.

15 (2) A local first responder peer support program must have a written policy that outlines, at a
16 minimum:

17 (a) qualifications for a peer supporter, including certification and continuing education
18 requirements;

19 (b) guidelines for what constitutes a peer support session from a conversation between peers;

20 (c) definitions for a group debrief and peer support team;

21 (d) the prohibition of recording in writing or by video or audio any peer support session;

22 (e) how peer supporters in the program shall comply with the Health Insurance Portability and
23 Accountability Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 1320d, et seq.;

24 (f) the ability of an employee to use multiple peer supporters;

25 (g) the protection of an employee from being forced to use a peer supporter who holds supervisory
26 authority over the employee;

27 (h) the prohibition of harassment or discrimination against an employee or volunteer who seeks
28 services from the peer support program; and

- 1 (i) confidentiality protections of the peer support program, including the following exceptions:
- 2 (i) if the employee has committed or plans to commit a crime; and
- 3 (ii) if the employee indicates the employee will cause harm to themselves or to others.
- 4 (3) A peer support session is confidential, and a qualified peer supporter in a local first responder
- 5 peer support program is prohibited from providing testimony about a peer support session, including individual
- 6 and group peer support sessions.

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8 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an

9 integral part of Title 7, chapter 32, part 21, and the provisions of Title 7, chapter 32, part 21, apply to [section 1].

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