

SENATE AMENDMENTS

2nd Printing

By: Thompson

H.B. No. 35

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a peer support network for first responders.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

Sec. 418.351. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Emergency medical services personnel" has the meaning assigned by Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code.

(2) "Firefighter" means a firefighter who is a permanent, paid employee of the fire department of a political subdivision. The term does not include a volunteer firefighter.

(3) "First responder" means emergency medical services personnel or a firefighter.

(4) "Peer" means a person who is a first responder or retired first responder.

Sec. 418.352. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The division shall develop a first responder peer support network. The network must include:

(1) peer-to-peer support;

(2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training;

(3) technical assistance for program development, peer service coordinators, licensed mental health professionals,

1 and peers; and

2 (4) identification, retention, and screening of
3 licensed mental health professionals.

4 (b) As part of the first responder peer support network, the
5 division:

6 (1) shall ensure first responders have support in both
7 urban and rural jurisdictions through the establishment of regional
8 peer support hubs; and

9 (2) may establish a program to connect first
10 responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first
11 responders.

12 (c) The division shall solicit and ensure that specialized
13 training is provided to persons who are peers and who want to
14 provide peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under
15 the network.

16 Sec. 418.353. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION.
17 Information relating to a first responder's participation in
18 peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under the
19 network is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter
20 552.

21 Sec. 418.354. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of
22 each year, the division shall submit a report to the governor and
23 the legislature that includes:

24 (1) the number of first responders who received peer
25 support through the network;

26 (2) the number of peers and peer service coordinators
27 trained, including the number of active peers and peer service

1 coordinators and the retention rate of peers and peer service
2 coordinators;

3 (3) the number of vacant regional director positions
4 and the average length of time each position has been vacant;

5 (4) the number and types of community engagement
6 events and outreach activities hosted by the network to promote
7 first responder awareness and use of the network;

8 (5) the number of critical incident responses and
9 wellness interventions facilitated by the network;

10 (6) an evaluation of the services provided under this
11 subchapter; and

12 (7) recommendations for program improvements.

13 SECTION 2. Section 419.036, Government Code, is amended by
14 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

15 (e) The commission may not take disciplinary action against
16 a regulated person based on the person's participation in
17 peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services and may not
18 consider the person's participation during any disciplinary
19 proceeding under this chapter.

20 SECTION 3. Section 773.061, Health and Safety Code, is
21 amended by adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

22 (f) The department may not take disciplinary action against
23 a person described by Subsection (a)(1) based on the person's
24 participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer
25 services and may not consider the person's participation during any
26 disciplinary proceeding under this chapter.

27 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

ADOPTED

MAY 25 2023

Lately Law
Secretary of the Senate

By: *Roger W. V.*

H.B. No. 35

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 35:

By: *[Signature]*

C.S. H.B. No. 35

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

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(1) "Emergency medical services personnel" has the meaning assigned by Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code.

(2) "Firefighter" means a firefighter who is a permanent, paid employee or a volunteer of the fire department of a political subdivision.

(3) "First responder" means emergency medical services personnel or a firefighter.

(4) "Peer" means a person who is a first responder or retired first responder.

Sec. 418.352. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The division shall develop a first responder peer support network. The network must include:

(1) peer-to-peer support;

(2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training;

(3) technical assistance for program development and implementation; and

1 (4) identification, retention, and screening of
2 licensed mental health professionals.

3 (b) As part of the first responder peer support network, the
4 division:

5 (1) shall ensure first responders have support in both
6 urban and rural jurisdictions to the extent possible through the
7 use of division resources; and

8 (2) may establish a program to connect first
9 responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first
10 responders.

11 (c) The division shall solicit and ensure that specialized
12 training is provided to persons who are peers and who want to
13 provide peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under
14 the network.

15 Sec. 418.353. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION.
16 Information relating to a first responder's participation in
17 peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services under the
18 network is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter
19 552.

20 Sec. 418.354. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than December 1 of
21 each year, the division shall submit a report to the governor and
22 the legislature that includes:

23 (1) the number of first responders who received peer
24 support through the network;

25 (2) the number of peers trained, the number of first
26 responders the peers served, and the retention rate of peers;

27 (3) the number and location of regional network

1 facilities in operation;

2 (4) an evaluation of the services provided under this
3 subchapter; and

4 (5) recommendations for program improvements.

5 SECTION 2. Section 419.036, Government Code, is amended by
6 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

7 (e) The commission may not take disciplinary action against
8 a regulated person based on the person's participation in
9 peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer services and may not
10 consider the person's participation during any disciplinary
11 proceeding under this chapter.

12 SECTION 3. Section 773.061, Health and Safety Code, is
13 amended by adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

14 (f) The department may not take disciplinary action against
15 a person described by Subsection (a)(1) based on the person's
16 participation in peer-to-peer support and other peer-to-peer
17 services and may not consider the person's participation during any
18 disciplinary proceeding under this chapter.

19 SECTION 4. Not later than March 31, 2026, the Texas Division
20 of Emergency Management shall develop the first responder peer
21 support network required by Subchapter K, Chapter 418, Government
22 Code, as added by this Act.

23 SECTION 5. The Texas Division of Emergency Management is
24 required to implement this Act only if the legislature appropriates
25 money specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not
26 appropriate money specifically for that purpose, the division may,
27 but is not required to, implement this Act using other

1 appropriations available for that purpose.

2 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

ADOPTED

MAY 25 2025

Lacey Saw
Secretary of the Senate

FLOOR AMENDMENT NO. 1

BY:

Roger W. N.

1 Amend C.S.H.B. No. 35 (senate committee report) in SECTION 1
2 of the bill as follows:

3 (1) In added Section 418.351(2), Government Code (page 1,
4 line 30), between "volunteer of" and "the", insert "a state agency
5 or".

6 (2) In added Section 418.354, Government Code (page 2,
7 between lines 11 and 12), insert the following appropriately
8 numbered subdivision and renumber subsequent subdivisions of that
9 section accordingly:

10 () the number of critical incident events responded
11 to by the network;

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 26, 2025

TO: Honorable Dustin Burrows, Speaker of the House, House of Representatives

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB35 by Thompson (Relating to a peer support network for first responders.), **As Passed 2nd House**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB35, As Passed 2nd House: a negative impact of (\$3,950,000) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five- Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Savings/(Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would require the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to develop a peer support network for first responders that would establish regional peer support hubs and connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders. The network would be required to include: (1) peer-to-peer support; (2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training; (3) technical assistance for program development and implementation; and (4) identification, retention, and screening of licensed mental health professionals.

Additionally, the bill would require an annual report from TDEM on certain information specified in the bill's provisions.

Methodology

Based on information provided by TDEM, it is estimated that the agency would need approximately \$2.0 million per fiscal year for the establishment of the regional peer support hubs. TDEM indicates that the provisions of the bill could be implemented by utilizing the private sector and sharing employees at the local level; however, any fiscal impact related to the cost associated with staffing these positions cannot be determined.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 575 Texas Division of Emergency Management

LBB Staff: JMc, NPe, LBO, CPo, NV

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 22, 2025

TO: Honorable Lois W. Kolkhorst, Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB35 by Thompson (Relating to a peer support network for first responders.), **Committee Report 2nd House, Substituted**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB35, Committee Report 2nd House, Substituted: a negative impact of (\$3,950,000) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five- Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Savings/(Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would require the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to develop a peer support network for first responders that would establish regional peer support hubs and connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders. The network would be required to include: (1) peer-to-peer support; (2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training; (3) technical assistance for program development and implementation; and (4) identification, retention, and screening of licensed mental health professionals.

Additionally, the bill would require an annual report from TDEM on certain information specified in the bill's

provisions.

Methodology

Based on information provided by TDEM, it is estimated that the agency would need approximately \$2.0 million per fiscal year for the establishment of the regional peer support hubs. TDEM indicates that the provisions of the bill could be implemented by utilizing the private sector and sharing employees at the local level; however, any fiscal impact related to the cost associated with staffing these positions cannot be determined.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 575 Texas Division of Emergency Management

LBB Staff: JMc, NPe, LBO, CPo, NV

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 12, 2025

TO: Honorable Lois W. Kolkhorst, Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB35 by Thompson (Relating to a peer support network for first responders.), **As Engrossed**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB35, As Engrossed: a negative impact of (\$3,950,000) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five- Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Savings/(Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would require the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to develop a peer support network for first responders that would establish regional peer support hubs and connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders. The network would be required to include: (1) peer-to-peer support; (2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training; (3) technical assistance for program development, peer service coordinators, licensed mental health professionals and peers; and (4) identification, retention, and screening of licensed mental health professionals.

Additionally, the bill would require an annual report from TDEM on certain information specified in the bill's provisions.

Methodology

Based on information provided by TDEM, it is estimated that the agency would need approximately \$2.0 million per fiscal year for the establishment of the regional peer support hubs. TDEM indicates that the provisions of the bill could be implemented by utilizing the private sector and sharing employees at the local level; however, any fiscal impact related to the cost associated with staffing these positions cannot be determined.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 575 Texas Division of Emergency Management

LBB Staff: JMc, NPe, LBO, CPo, NV

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 21, 2025

TO: Honorable Gary VanDeaver, Chair, House Committee on Public Health

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB35 by Thompson (Relating to a peer support network for first responders.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB35, Committee Report 1st House, Substituted: a negative impact of (\$9,083,459) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five- Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2026	(\$5,103,210)
2027	(\$3,980,249)
2028	(\$3,980,249)
2029	(\$4,009,499)
2030	(\$3,980,249)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Savings/(Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2025
2026	(\$5,103,210)	10.2
2027	(\$3,980,249)	10.2
2028	(\$3,980,249)	10.2
2029	(\$4,009,499)	10.2
2030	(\$3,980,249)	10.2

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would require the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to develop a peer support network for first responders that would establish regional peer support hubs and connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders. The network would be required to include: (1) peer-to-peer support; (2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training; (3) technical assistance for program development, peer service coordinators, licensed mental health professionals and peers; and (4) identification, retention, and screening of licensed mental health professionals.

Additionally, the bill would require an annual report from TDEM on certain information specified in the bill's

provisions.

Methodology

Based on information provided by TDEM, it is estimated that the agency would need to hire 1.0 State Director of Program, 8.0 Regional Hub Coordinators, and 1.2 Program Specialist V for the recruitment, education, and training of peer mentors across the state for a total of approximately \$2.0 million per fiscal year for salaries and benefits, travel, and other related operating expenses. The agency would need \$0.9 million in fiscal year 2026 for motor vehicles for the program director and regional hub coordinators to recruit and train peer mentors across the state. Additionally, it is estimated that the agency would need approximately \$2.0 million per fiscal year for the establishment of the regional peer support hubs.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 407 Commission on Law Enforcement, 575 Texas Division of Emergency Management, 710 Texas A&M University System Administrative and General Offices

LBB Staff: JMc, NPe, LBO, CPo, NV

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 13, 2025

TO: Honorable Gary VanDeaver, Chair, House Committee on Public Health

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB35 by Thompson (Relating to a peer support network for first responders.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB35, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$3,950,000) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five- Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Probable (Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1
2026	(\$1,975,000)
2027	(\$1,975,000)
2028	(\$1,975,000)
2029	(\$1,975,000)
2030	(\$1,975,000)

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would transfer the peer support network for law enforcement officers program from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to Texas Southern University and reestablish it as a first responder peer support network. The program would establish regional support hubs and connect first responders with clinical resources at no cost to the first responders. The network would require Texas Southern University to develop: (1) peer-to-peer support; (2) training for peer service coordinators and peers that includes suicide prevention training; (3) technical assistance for program development, peer service coordinators, licensed mental health professionals and peers; and (4) identification, retention, and screening of licensed mental health professionals.

Additionally, the bill would require an annual report from Texas Southern University on certain information

specified in the bill's provisions.

Methodology

The program is currently at the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), which contracts with University of North Texas at Dallas, and is funded at \$1.2 million per fiscal year. Texas Southern University estimates a cost of approximately \$3.2 million per fiscal year to establish and operate the expanded program. This cost, partially offset by the savings at TCOLE, would result in a net cost of approximately \$2.0 million per fiscal year.

Texas Southern University expects to continue the current model of a state director and co-director as well as the eight-region format with one regional director each. However, Texas Southern University would propose an increase to 19.0 FTEs for the program by adding a co-director for each region to assist the director in recruiting peer volunteers, facilitating the training, informing the first responder community in their respective regions about available resources, and assisting first responders in connecting with resource providers.

Technology

Texas Southern University models the following technology costs, included in their estimate:

- (1) \$5,000 per FTE initial technology start-up costs;
- (2) Provisioning mobile phones and services for state (2) and regional (16) directors and co-directors at \$110 per phone;
- (3) Maintaining the website of service providers at \$10,000 per year;
- (4) Maintaining iOS/Android application at \$200 per month; and
- (5) \$250,000 per fiscal year to accommodate the technology needs of the statewide peer network program.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 407 Commission on Law Enforcement, 411 Commission on Fire Protection, 537 State Health Services, Department of, 717 Texas Southern University

LBB Staff: JMc, NPe, LBO, CBR, NV