

# Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

*Chantell Wheeler 271-1403*

**SB 411-FN**, relative to critical incident stress management for emergency services providers, and establishing a violent act injury disability retirement for public safety employees.

**Hearing Date:** January 13, 2022

**Time Opened:** 10:00 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 10:10 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Carson, Reagan, Ricciardi, Cavanaugh and Prentiss

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires a critical incident stress management debriefing following certain emergency services incidents. The bill also establishes a retirement system benefit for group II members retired due to a violent act injury.

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**Sponsors:**  
Sen. Cavanaugh

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Cavanaugh, Ashley Gray (Department of Corrections), Jim Demers (NH Police Association),

**Who opposes the bill:** Officer Justin Breton, Manchester PD, Margaret Byrnes (NH Municipal Association)

**Who is neutral on the bill:** Marty Karlon (NH Retirement System)

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**  
**Senator Cavanaugh:**

- This bill requires critical incident stress management debriefing following certain emergency services incidents and establishes a retirement system benefit for group two members retired due to a violent act injury.
- Wants to maintain momentum in moving this bill forward, knowing that the bill needs work, but maintains it is critical.

**Senator Carson** reports they will hold this bill as long as possible to allow the officer in question to go through a board process.

### **Jim Demers, NH Police Association**

- In 2021 SB153 was brought to light by Officer Dougherty's process.
- NHRS offers a waiver review process for retirees with extreme circumstances and the police union is agreeable to holding the bill until Officer Dougherty's process is complete.
- There is confusion related to the first part of the bill that requires stress management.

### **Summary of testimony presented in opposition:**

#### **Officer Justin Breton, Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator, Manchester PD and Patch, Comfort Dog**

- Expressed concerns with first portion of bill that mandates participation in critical incident stress management. There are many tools used after a critical incident, and not every tool is appropriate for everyone.
- Critical stress debriefings should be voluntary – not mandatory.
- Willing to work with interested parties to include language for retired first responder.
- Patch greeted members of the committee and members of the public and was warmly received by all.

**Senator Carson** followed up with an invitation to continue work on language to assist retired first responders.

**Senator Cavanaugh** expressed his interest in assisting.

### **Neutral Information Presented:**

#### **Marty Karlon, NH Retirement System**

- Marty Karlon agreed the bill needs work as it uses language from MA that is not applicable to NH.

cbw

Date Hearing Report completed: January 18, 2022