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February 28, 2023

**TO:** The Honorable C.T. Wilson  
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

**FROM:** Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer  
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

**RE:** HB335 - Workers' Compensation - Occupational Disease Presumptions -  
First Responders - **Support**

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The Office of Attorney General supports House Bill 335, Delegate Hill's legislation to provide that a first responder who is diagnosed by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist with posttraumatic stress disorder ("PTSD") is presumed to have an occupational disease that was suffered in the line of duty and compensable under workers' compensation law.

According to the Institutes of Health Multi-Specialty Clinics, "[m]ore than 80 percent of first responders experience traumatic events on the job" and, consequently, "first responders are at a high risk of developing PTSD as a work-related injury or condition."<sup>1</sup> House Bill 335 merely recognizes these realities and provides first responders with a rebuttable presumption that their diagnosed PTSD was precipitated by a traumatic work experience.

We think Delegate Hill's legislation sets a proper tone by doing right by our first responders. Of course, the legislation may lead to more approved claims for workers' compensation and should be adequately funded.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 335.

cc: The Hon. Terri L. Hill & Committee Members

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<sup>1</sup> See Institutes of Health: Multi-Specialty Clinics, available online at: <https://institutesofhealth.org/ptsd-in-firstresponders/> (last visited on Feb. 20, 2023).

This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the House and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or [sbrantley@oag.state.md.us](mailto:sbrantley@oag.state.md.us).