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February 19, 2023

The Honorable Representative Josephson
Alaska State House of Representatives

Dear Representative Josephson:

On behalf of the Anchorage Police Department Employees Association (APDEA), I am writing to communicate our support of HB15 which focuses peer support counseling and confidentiality. Having been an integral part of the Anchorage Police Department's current Peer Support Team since its inception, I can say, with first-hand knowledge, how instrumental the Team has been in a short period of time.

Without a doubt, our team of nearly 30 trained employees have been in positions countless times to offer counseling, be a trusted listener, empathize with peers after traumatic incidents, and coordinate Critical Incident Stress Debriefs when a situation is significant enough to warrant one. I am certain these contacts have not only kept employees from spiraling into depression or allowing events to affect their work performance but have literally saved the lives and jobs of some. I know this because individuals directly involved have come to me personally and told me so.

I cannot express how important this bill is for ALL law enforcement agencies, emergency service providers, and the Department of Corrections. I truly thank you for your commitment to furthering the efforts to support our professionals whom we entrust to save lives in our communities. The ability to provide emotional and moral support to these employees only strengthens their resiliency and allows them to continue to provide exceptional service.

Please reach out to me at any time if there's anything I, or the APDEA, can do to assist with the passage of this extremely important bill. Thank you for your time and continued dedication to Alaska and its Law Enforcement community.

Sincerely,

Kelly Huston (907) 575-5013
APD Peer Support Coordinator

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