

Dear Senate Health and Welfare Committee members,

As a member of the Steering Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and Chair of its Advocacy, Outreach and Education Committee, I feel fervently that a representative from DAIL/VR should be included in the proposed First Responders Commission.

Indeed it is the Employer Assistance Program (EAP), within VR Division of DAIL, which is very often the initial referral for First Responders who have been subjected to trauma in the line of duty. The EAP provides such services for the Cities and Towns statewide (except for the State Police). The critical services provided by VR are instrumental in return to the workforce and return to physical and mental health for these brave First Responders whose ongoing acts of selflessness have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considering the representation from DMH and DOC, for example, it seems to be logical to include DAIL/VR. Also, I do not think such an addition to the Commission would incur any further costs.

I listened in today during the brief hearing on S.42 and Chairman Lyons asked for a brief waiting period, prior to tomorrow's anticipated vote on the bill, for additional comments from those remotely "attending."

I respectfully offer my comments to the Committee! Thank you for your consideration of this important matter!

Sam Liss

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC); Chair, Advocacy, Outreach, Education Committee