_____ BILL NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____
(Primary Sponsor)

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ALLOWING A LOCAL FIRST RESPONDER ENTITY TO ESTABLISH A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF A LOCAL FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM; AND PROHIBITING A QUALIFIED PEER SUPPORTER FROM TESTIFYING ABOUT THE CONTENT OF A PEER SUPPORT SESSION."

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

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Local first responder peer support programs.** (1) A police department, sheriff's office, fire department, or emergency medical service provider may establish a first responder peer support program that is in compliance with the provisions of this section.

(2) A local first responder peer support program must have a written policy that outlines, at a minimum:

(a) qualifications for a peer supporter, including certification and continuing education requirements;

(b) guidelines for what constitutes a peer support session from a conversation between peers;

(c) definitions for a group debrief and peer support team;

(d) the prohibition of recording in writing or by video or audio any peer support session;

(e) how peer supporters in the program shall comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 1320d, et seq.;

(f) the ability of an employee to use multiple peer supporters;

(g) the protection of an employee from being forced to use a peer supporter who holds supervisory authority over the employee;

(h) the prohibition of harassment or discrimination against an employee or volunteer who seeks services from the peer support program; and

(i) confidentiality protections of the peer support program, including the following exceptions:

(i) if the employee has committed or plans to commit a crime; and

(ii) if the employee indicates the employee will cause harm to themself or to others.

(3) A peer support session is confidential, and a qualified peer supporter in a local first responder peer support program is prohibited from providing testimony about a peer support session, including individual and group peer support sessions.

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 7, chapter 32, part 21, and the provisions of Title 7, chapter 32, part 21, apply to [section 1].

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