



MEDIA RELEASE

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AGNC OPPOSES PTSD BILL

PARACHUTE, CO – The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado has issued a statement on behalf of its member governments, opposing legislation that would extend presumptive Workers Compensation coverage to first responders for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, beginning up to two years from the date of the triggering incident.

“While the Association and its member local governments recognize that instances of PTSD among our emergency workers can be a critical issue, and are committed to continuing to work with local police, sheriff and fire departments and mental health professionals in ensuring that individual cases are adequately addressed, we do not believe that presumptive eligibility in any form is appropriate in any labor relationship. Under the provisions of this bill, a triggering diagnosis of PTSD would be presumed up to two years from the occurrence of a police officer or firefighter encountering something that is common to their daily work, including exposure to death or seriously bodily injury of another person. Further, we believe that the extent of time allowed between an actual incident and when benefits can be triggered is too long, at two years.

“The unintended consequences that this bill presents are staggering: potentially, **every police officer on a given force could end up on Workers Compensation simply as a result of their regular experiences on any average workday.** The costs that this would impose on local governments could be crippling.

“In addition, we have to wonder where this will lead; will emergency room workers be eligible next? Or the Coroner who is exposed to bodies on a daily basis? What about the reporters covering the story – could this carry over into the private sector? **This bill clearly sets a dangerous precedent that could carry over to main street private business.**

“This bill is an unjustified state preemption of a local issue, represents yet another unfunded mandate being placed on local communities, and sets a bad precedent of state interference with questions surrounding the rights and risks assumed by employers and employees.

“All of our local governments care deeply about the men and women who serve their communities as first responders, and are committed to caring for them when injured in any way; but it is unreasonable to ask local municipalities and counties – and their taxpaying citizens – to

shoulder the costs, stemming from added claims and increased premiums, of presumptive additions to Workers Compensation coverage.”

For more information, or to schedule an interview, please contact AGNC Executive Director Scott McInnis at [970-285-7630](tel:970-285-7630)

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AGNC is a council of governments representing cities and counties in northwest Colorado including Mesa, Garfield, Rio Blanco, Moffat and Routt.