



# Cheyenne Police Department

415 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001  
<http://www.cheyennepd.org>



*Protecting the legend...*

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Wyoming Governor Signs Peer Support Confidentiality Bill**

CHEYENNE, Wy — Thursday, March 2, Governor Mark Gordon signed a peer support counseling-confidentiality bill into law (SF0112) at the Wyoming State Capitol. The bill ensures confidentiality for first responders when participating in peer support services following critical incidents.

“Chief Francisco (Cheyenne Police Department) brought this issue to my attention,” said Senator Tara Nethercott, the bill’s primary sponsor. “This bill serves to provide protections to encourage first responders to communicate with each other when they may be experiencing concerns associated with trauma.”

Responding to a critical incident can have a significant impact on the mental health of our law enforcement officers and emergency services providers. To ensure prompt access to necessary services, many departments rely on trained peer support specialists who can help direct first responders to mental health support services, or offer their own support as needed.

However, the lack of confidentiality afforded to peer support counselors has complicated their roles and can deter first responders from using this service. The sensitive nature of mental health issues is further compounded by concerns that first responders could experience professional judgement due to their decision to seek mental help.

“We know that our first responders suffer from a high rate of suicide,” said Nethercott. “This is more of that effort that I am committed to working toward in order to lower those suicide rates among our first responders and recognize the service that they provide to our state and to all of us as individuals.”

Under this legislation, a peer support specialist will not be required to testify or divulge any information received during counseling related to a critical incident or traumatic event. The language does provide for limited exemptions, including when a person is in danger of serious bodily harm or death, or if a criminal act is disclosed.

“I am honored to bring this issue before the state, it has become a best practice in many other states,” said Chief Francisco to Governor Mark Gordon. “Thanks to your leadership, our first responders will have access to confidential support that will allow them to more freely get help when needed.”



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Special thanks to Senator Tara Nethercott, for sponsoring the bill along with co-sponsors, Sen. Cale Case, Sen. Eric Barlow, Rep. Jon Conrad, Rep. Chip Neiman, and Rep. Tony Niemiec.

Also, a thank you to Byron Oedekoven with the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police, fellow first responder groups, and mental health professionals who testified in support of this important legislation.

View the bill here: <https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2023/SF0112>

