



DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

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January 26, 2018

Honorable Alan Powell
Chairman, Public Safety and Homeland Security
613-B Coverdell Legislative Office Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill 703 (LC 41 1271)

Dear Chairman Powell:

This bill would create the Governor's Office of Public Safety Support to provide counseling and other critical incident support services to agencies employing public safety officers. The office may directly provide counseling services to public safety officers and their immediate families, but the office must also develop and host training related to critical incident stress management and certify individuals who have received the training. The office would be assigned to the Department of Public Safety for administrative purposes.

Number of Individuals Covered

Numerous state agencies and local entities currently provide counseling and training services to individuals in the public safety field. This bill expands the definition of a public safety officer to include law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, Georgia National Guard members, state highway employees, and emergency management rescue specialists. See **Table 1** for the populations of these groups.

Table 1. Public Safety Officer Recipients by Group

Public Safety Officer Type	Count
POST-Certified Individuals (Law Enforcement, Corrections)	61,536
Firefighters (Full-time, Part-time, and Volunteer)	31,087
Emergency Medical Technicians	21,780
Georgia National Guard Members	13,804
State Highway Employees	2,603
Emergency Management Rescue Specialists	192
Total	131,002

Cost to Operate Governor's Office of Public Safety Support

The cost estimate for the office is based on a similar program in South Carolina, the anticipated workload, and other information provided by the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS). As shown in **Table 2**, we estimated annual costs of approximately \$1.3 million and one-time costs of \$270,000. The cost estimate includes 11 positions. In addition to a director and assistant director, clinicians would be assigned to north and south Georgia to coordinate events for their half of the state. A total of five regional peers would travel within the two regions to provide training or direct counseling services as needed. Two administrative assistant positions are also included.

Table 2. Estimated Cost of Governor's Office of Public Safety Support

Type of Expense	One-Time	Annual
Personnel (11 positions)		\$1,159,317
Vehicles (9)	\$270,000	\$18,000
Seminars		\$88,000
Trainings and Certifications		\$55,000
<u>Other Operating</u>		<u>\$12,000</u>
Total	\$270,000	\$1,332,317

It should be noted that the costs could increase depending on the frequency of emergencies, officer shootings, and other trauma-inducing events each year. In addition, the estimate does not include funding for additional office space, if needed.

Sincerely,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Teresa A. MacCartney, Director
Office of Planning and Budget