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February 15, 2022

The Honorable Ayanna S. Pressley  
1108 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Pressley:

The U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA), the nation's largest emergency management professional association with approximately 5,000 members across the country, is pleased to endorse H.R. 5703, the Post-Disaster Mental Health Support Act. IAEM-USA represents the profession dedicated to protecting America's local communities from all hazards and threats, natural and human-made.

With an increase in both the frequency and severity of disasters affecting cities, counties, states, tribal nations, regions, and nationally, there is also an increased awareness of the major impact on the mental health of survivors and responders due to disasters. As a result, there is a necessity for greater resources to assist with mental health needs in the wake of disasters.

IAEM-USA recognizes the impact that mental health needs have on their communities after a disaster. With the types of disasters that are rising in frequency such as pandemics and civil unrest, the mental health impacts are rising at an even faster pace than from other, more "traditional," disasters. IAEM also recognizes the need for its members to have an increased quantity and quality of resources at their disposal to provide assistance to constituents.

The Post-Disaster Mental Health Support Act provides the ability for mental health resources to be available for those who need them, and when they need them. In addition, the mission of this legislation would clearly fall under every phase of the emergency management cycle – preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

In closing, IAEM offers its full support for H.R. 5703, and we appreciate your leadership in introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carolyn J. Harshman", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Carolyn J. Harshman, MPA, CEM  
President, International Association of Emergency Managers