



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 11, 2018

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**Statement by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas**

**In Support of a Motion to Address Suicide Rates among Los Angeles County's  
First Responders, Emergency Services Professionals and Death Investigators**

"I would like to thank my colleagues, Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Janice Hahn, for their leadership on bringing forth this [motion](#).

"Addressing the mental health and wellbeing of those on the front lines is critically important and a good way to honor the heroism of the public servants who responded to the call for help on 9/11.

"A recent report by the Ruderman Family Foundation says it all: the number of firefighters and law enforcement officers who took their own lives outnumbered all line-of-duty deaths in 2017.

"Suicide is just one of many troubling outcomes linked to the traumatic experiences of our first responders and emergency professionals. Depression and substance abuse are others.

"This Board has committed to violence prevention as a public health issue, and to address community trauma before it spirals.

“That is why we recently opened the Community Healing and Trauma Prevention Center at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Public Health, to tackle the root issues of complex trauma.

“Now, we have an opportunity to apply these same principles to support those who serve us.

“When our first responders are taken care of, it not only impacts their health and their families – it also impacts the service they provide to County residents.

“Therefore, I am compelled and equally proud to vote “aye” in support of our first responders, emergency services professionals and death investigators.”

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