Good morning,

My name is Nicholas Karim, Acting Trustee of FOP Nevada C.O Lodge 21 and Forensic Specialist at Stein Forensic Hospital. I am submitting my strong support in reference to the Peer Support program which is an action item (NDOC SCAAP re-allocation under Section 7) for consideration on the April 11th, 2024, agenda.

As a Forensic Specialist working in the mental health field with inmates deemed incompetent to stand trial, I get to experience how stress and trauma can affect someone's day-to-day life. Through my personal experience, I've learned about mental health issues and the importance of having strong support.
Working long hours, being in unpredictable situations, and being exposed to violence and trauma especially not knowing whether I will make it back to my family takes a toll on any human, regardless of their strength. To help officers cope, it is crucial to have a peer support program that I am confident will reduce stigma and promote self-care. There are many statistics out there that show how corrections officers face many mental health challenges due to their demanding and stressful work environments.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that there is a 39% higher suicide rate among corrections officers than in the overall population. This tragic reality demonstrates how urgently law enforcement agencies need to provide mental health support. Furthermore, corrections officers have a life expectancy that is 16 years shorter than the national average— only 59 years. These figures don't only reflect statistics; they also represent real people—our friends, family, and coworkers—who are silently battling the burden of their past experiences. Every figure has a backstory filled with suffering, trials of fortitude, and solitary struggles. It's time to reach out in solidarity and provide a ray of hope by implementing a peer support program.

I am hopeful that together, we can rewrite the narrative, turning statistics into stories of triumph.

Our officers deserve nothing less.