

## **Assistant Chief Christopher Tracy**

Training Director  
Fairfield Regional Fire School

Chairman Stillman and honorable Public Safety Committee Members, thank you for your time. Those of us in the fire service understand that most folks knowledge of fire fighters come from the movies or the funerals, but we're testifying today before our champions up here in Hartford; we're here to answer your questions and provide you the information to help move SB 759 through to a final vote of adoption during this legislative session.

Even as I thanked Senator Stillman and Governor Rell for approving Fairfield and Burrville Regional Fire School Design funding last summer, and Hartford and New Haven Regional Fire Schools were moving into their Construction phase toward completion, our attention in the Education Committee of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control was already turning to the acquisition of land for the Valley Regional Fire School in Beacon Falls and Eastern Regional Fire School in Willimantic.

Back in 2001 before 9/11 the CGA had the vision with HB 6092 to fund this study which details \$60M in capital improvements to rebuild our state's Regional Fire Schools; in the 8 years since this Committee recognized and responded to our need, these facilities have continued to deteriorate; at this moment my own Burn Building, the last of our Regional Schools still operational, is out of service pending the completion of critical repairs.

Connecticut's recruit fire fighters in training at the Academy are currently being bused to Massachusetts for live fire training with Class A combustibles, which most closely reflect the hazards they'll face in the communities they're in training to protect. With your support of SB 759 they'll train and maintain those life-saving skills in Hartford and New Haven, in Fairfield and Litchfield, in Willimantic and Beacon Falls, in Wolcott and Middletown.

We understand that your colleagues are performing fiscal triage up here in Hartford, but you understand that our students are performing life-saving triage back home in their communities. Your first responders need these training facilities in order to do that most difficult job; as the sign over Probie School at Randall's Island in NYC charges us all, "May no man's ghost come back to say, 'My training let me down.'"