



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 18, 2010

Senator Andrea Stillman, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Representative Stephan Dargan, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Subject: **SENATE BILL #5156**

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association wishes to go on record in opposition to the concept provided by **Raised House Bill #5156, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISMISSAL OF LOCAL FIRE MARSHALS.**

Our Association represents approximately 27,000 career and volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut. Among those are many members of the CT Fire Marshals Association (CFMA).

We do not feel that this legislation, as proposed, would be in the best interest of the citizens of the State of Connecticut. The State of Connecticut Fire Service has been long been recognized as a leader in Fire Safety and Fire Prevention. Because of previous unfortunate circumstances, the State's Fire Safety/Fire Prevention reputation is well known. From having passed progressive legislation because of a circus fire in the 1940's, to passing proactive fire safety legislation as a result of a multiple fatal fire in a Rhode Island nightclub, to progressive fire sprinkler legislation after a nursing home fire in Hartford, this state has always been at the forefront of fire safety. I must mention that these legislative efforts are the result of the very fire safety minded, forward sighted members of this committee.

This committee would be moving backward if fire safety inspections are left to be completed by a local Fire Marshal who could be summarily dismissed by a political body that did not agree with the way that Fire Marshal performed his duties. Once again, the State of Connecticut was progressive in recognizing this as being a possibility. In the State of Connecticut a Fire Marshal has to be certified. These individuals have to complete a very rigorous training program by the State Fire Marshal's office. In approximately 1986 this state passed CGS 29-298b which allows for a complaint procedure for negligence of a local Fire Marshal; CGS 29-299 (1949) allows for the dismissal of a local Fire Marshal; & CGS 29-300 (1949) allows for a dismissal hearing prior to dismissing a local Fire Marshal. We feel that these procedures, already in statute, allow for a proper procedure for the dismissal of a local Fire Marshal.

Once again, we must state that we feel that this legislation is not in the best interest of fire safety for the citizens of the State of Connecticut. We would ask this committee to not support this legislative initiative.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ted Schfoll, Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association