

**Testimony of Peter Sachs
Secretary/Treasurer
Branford, CT Fire Police**

Having reviewed Joseph Kaliko's submitted testimony, I fully support his legal reasoning regarding the need for the proposed legislative changes in H.B. 5054. Although the volunteer fire, ambulance and fire police personnel in Branford have not been the subject of suit, the nature of their jobs certainly poses that possibility. Should that occur, I believe it would be a terrible injustice for these volunteer first responders to be put in a position where they would have to defend themselves personally, solely because they choose to do their jobs without being paid.

Neither the owner of a burning structure, nor an injured person knows or cares whether career or volunteer fire or ambulance personnel are extinguishing their fire, treating their injuries or salvaging their valuables. They don't know or care whether the people helping them are being paid or working for free. They know only that competent and dedicated people are there— ready, willing and able to render emergency assistance. The legislature should view career and volunteer fire or ambulance personnel with the same transparency.

By law, all career and volunteer fire and ambulance personnel receive the same training and must meet the same standards. Similarly, fire police receive state-mandated training and certification. The only true difference between career and volunteer fire and ambulance personnel is that the former cost communities more money than the latter. Indeed, volunteer fire and ambulance personnel, including fire police, provide vital services at very little cost to their communities.

Although the old saying is, "no good deed goes unpunished," in reality no good deed should ever be punished. If the State requires volunteer fire and ambulance personnel to meet the exact same standards as their career counterparts, it follows that the State should also afford them the exact same protection with regard to potential lawsuits. To fully indemnify career fire and ambulance personnel while only partially indemnifying their volunteer counterparts is, in a word, nonsensical. Moreover, to exclude fire police entirely from indemnification and defense reimbursement is, if not a mere oversight, absurd.

I join Mr. Kaliko's in respectfully requesting that CGS Sec. 7-101a be amended to extend the protections it affords to volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance corps, volunteer fire police patrols and their respective members, and that CGS Sec. 7-308 be repealed in it's entirety.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Sachs, Esq.