



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

March 1, 2012

Senator Edith Prague, Co-Chair Labor & Public Employees Committee
Representative Zeke Zalaski, Co-Chair Labor & Public Employees Committee
Senator Edwin Gomes, Vice Chair Labor & Public Employees Committee
Representative Ezequiel Santiago, Vice Chair Labor & Public Employees Committee
Senator Tony Guglielmo, Ranking Member Labor & Public Employees Committee
Representative John Rigby, Ranking Member Labor & Public Employees Committee

My name is Ted Schroll and I am the Legislative Representative for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. The Association represents approximately 26,000 career and volunteer firefighters in Connecticut.

Our Association wishes to go on record as being in support of **Raised House Bill #5233, AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR FIREFIGHTERS**. You will be hearing from other speakers who will elaborate more than I on these bills, but this Association supports this bill.

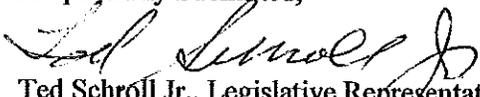
The profession of firefighting is a rather unique profession. Many times you hear firefighters referring to other firefighters as "brother firefighter" or "sister firefighter". They truly feel this way amongst their peers. Many times they perform tasks that either no one else wants to do, or are not able to do. AND, they do it under emergency or life threatening conditions. Additionally, if there is no accepted practice to perform these tasks, they are expected to find a way to successfully complete that given task. Much of their equipment is unique to their profession.

Because of these factors, most firefighters are close personally and tend to "stick together". Most career firefighters work a 24 hour shift. They work together and relax together. Some work weeks that they work overtime; they spend more time together working than they spend with their families. They build up a **familial** relationship that is seldom seen within other professions. Because of this relationship, when a fellow firefighter is injured or killed, it is like losing a family member. When the loss occurs while working together, it becomes more difficult for a firefighter to overcome these feelings of loss. The normal grieving procedures that are successful with other professions are not always successful with firefighters. These times are when the conditions within this bill would be helpful.

Please note that the conditions within this bill are not for any injury. Workers' compensation benefits would only "kick in" when one firefighter observes the death of a fellow firefighter in the line of duty, and if that firefighter is diagnosed by a board certified mental health professional with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of that observation. A firefighter should not have to take personal vacation time or sick time to recover from the effects of a familial death that occurred while in the line of duty.

PLEASE SUPPORT RAISED HOUSE BILL #5233.

Respectfully Submitted,


Ted Schroll Jr., Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association