

Dear sirs and madam

My name is peter Grusauskas

I am here to speak against Raised HB 6434

I am currently president of the Goshen Volunteer Fire Company and owner operator of Goshen Oil Company Inc.,

As a member of the fire company, I have served for 38 years. Over half of that time as a chief officer and 16 years as their Chief. I am here on behalf of the company to oppose passage of HB 6434 which aims to include all volunteer fire departments and volunteer ambulance service under the umbrella of the DOL CONNOSHA . Currently most of the organizations do not fall under this umbrella, but rather either fall under Federal OSHA and if exempted there, then at the very least, fall under regulations and oversight of the EPA , DOT and State Department of Health and OEMS.

The department of labor has stated that we the volunteer providers in this state are "cowboys" I'm here to tell you in near 40 years of volunteer service we are anything but cowboys. No volunteer gets up at (2) two in the morning, to an alarm beeper going off, that doesn't want to come back home in 1 piece. We the volunteers are safe and I dare say have a better safety record than our CONNOSHA counterparts.

We volunteers as I stated do have oversight from various agencies but the most in-depth and critical oversight is from ourselves as a group when critiquing and debriefing a completed mission. We continually redefine how we accomplish a mission, if we feel it could or should have gone better.

Last April the 41 town's emergency services of Litchfield county through their Litchfield County Emergency Plan Organization resolved not to support this same bill presented last year. We the volunteers in the state of Connecticut, rely on our state boards and commissions as well as our representatives to act in the best interest of our volunteer groups. We unfortunately do not get "paid time off" from our jobs to come and speak on a proposed bill, but, don't take our silence as vote of endorsement.

The proposed bill is at best vague in definition of what a Volunteer fire or Ambulance service is. If a fire service, like Many Volunteer fire services, pays a stipend to its officers is it still considered volunteer? Many ambulance services in the state also pay a stipend or even have paid coverage, are they covered under this law?

The mission of CONNOSHA I believe "is to make a safe work environment for the residence of Connecticut to work in" and they have now, singled out fire and ambulance services but, turned a blind eye to the countless other volunteer agencies within the state that, are as, or even more dangerous than EMS or most fire operations. NUSAR a volunteer underwater search and rescue team and others in the state like them, are not included in this oversight, yet like so many, k-9 search and rescue teams, as well as international, national and local ski patrols, ...wilderness rescue, high angle rope teams and the like,

continue to provide safely the skill sets needed, to the Connecticut residents who find themselves in harm's way.

The current system in place does work... DoI cannot point to accident after accident within the volunteer ranks, because of reckless behaviors or disregard to existing standards such as those of NFPA. They actually have very little factual evidence to even have brought this bill forward, other than perhaps a desire to grow their bureaucracy and need more staffing to handle the hundreds of new entities being brought under their umbrella.

We are glad that in this year's bill there was an inclusion of the house amendment from last year, but we would further ask, that if this bill is to continue to be brought forward. It would be changed to also include the amendment brought forward by Senator Roraback in the last session, which limits the ability for the state to assess fines for small minor type violations they may find in a volunteer organization and only have the power to assess them if there is willful negligence resulting in serious injury or death.

As we all know funds for volunteer agencies are tuff to come by and it seems as, was the case in Kent in 2011, when they paid \$1260.00 for what I understand was a minor violation. That seems to me, a bit excessive.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns with your committee

Peter Grusauskas

President Goshen Volunteer Fire Company, Inc