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OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF

Public Health Committee
Testimony in Support of SB999

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.***

March 17, 2015

My name is Robert Shea. I serve as the Chief of the Portland Fire Department. I manage a fire department that is comprised of 82 volunteer fire fighters. Last year, we responded to 980 calls for service, almost 70% of those calls were for medical emergencies. I also served as President of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association in 2014. The Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association represents 463 Fire Chief Officers from across the State of Connecticut.

I am writing to ask you not to support Section 1 of SB999, which was introduced last year in Section 1 of Substitute Bill #439. Our membership is not in support of the current language defined in SB999 related to the interference of a provider when acting as a emergency medical service.

As written, the passage of this bill could potentially erode the National Incident Management System currently used to maintain safety and the unified role of responders. EMS is currently part of this structure as a separate sector reporting to the commanding officer of the incident. Fire representatives have meet with board members to discuss the importance of our command structure and expressed the fact that issues related to care and the potential interference of such care by a commanding officer are local issues and should be handled by the Medical Control Agency of that jurisdiction. As in the past we have requested that the advisory board change the language to better serve their concerns without jeopardizing our current operating standards. Local issues are not a reason to change an entire system we all currently work under together.

Thank you ,

Robert Shea

Robert Shea
Chief, Portland Fire Department