



Connecticut Fire Marshals Association

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Connecticut General Assembly

Committee on Public Safety and Security

March 3, 2015

To the Distinguished Chairs,

Representative Dargan, Senator Larson and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee.

My name is Kevin Kowalski, I am the acting Fire Marshal of Simsbury, Connecticut and the Legislative Committee Chair for the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association (CFMA), which represents over 300 members.

I am here today to testify on "S.B. 1012 AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKE ALARMS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS" and "H.B. 6911 AN ACT REQUIRING VERIFICATION TO REDUCE FALSE ALARMS".

In reference to SB 1012, I applaud this committee's effort to require improved reliability in Fire Warning Appliances that require batteries to operate. Some facts to consider with this requirement is that the sealed ten year battery life is four to five times the cost of the standard 9 volt replaceable type. Additionally there are numerous manufacturers that make the replaceable battery type, yet few make the aforementioned "ten year type". I would like to have the Public Safety Committee consider an adjustment to this law.

Current law requires that only homes built after 1978 be required to have a working smoke detector. We as Fire marshals strongly encourage the installation of battery operated smoke alarms in these homes but we cannot require them. The respective Fire Departments across the state have free Smoke Detector installation programs for those who cannot afford them.

It is the intention of the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association to clarify for not only this committee but also the general public that that all homes should be required to have this life saving device.



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In regards to the second bill previously mentioned HB6911 AAC False Alarms

While the CFMA believes that the general assembly should adopt laws to reduce false alarms, We are respectfully asking that you delete Subsection c 1 , requesting that the alarm company take the time to verify that there is *in fact* a fire that could cause needless delay at a time that may mean the difference between life and death. In the matter of 2- 5 minutes a fire could develop to the point where all exits are blocked causing needless injury or death. The whole purpose of smoke detection is for EARLY warning. To negate the early warning in attempting to contact the subscriber could be tragic. The subsection mentioned is as follows:

Request that you delete Subsection (C) (1)

(c) (1) After each activation of an alarm system, an alarm monitoring company shall make a reasonable attempt to contact the subscriber, by telephone or other electronic means, to verify whether the activation of the alarm system was caused by fire, a criminal act, emergency or an act of nature such as an earthquake, tornado, hurricane or storm prior to requesting the Division of State Police or a municipal police or fire department to respond to the alarm. If the initial attempt to contact the subscriber fails and the subscriber has provided a secondary telephone number or other electronic means by which to contact the subscriber, such company shall make a second reasonable attempt to contact the subscriber.

Again,

I would like to thank the committee for their time here today, in hearing my testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association.

Kevin J. Kowalski

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