



CHIEF DOUGLAS F. JACKSON
FIRE MARSHAL/DC ANTHONY D. MOSCATO

ASSISTANT CHIEF CHARLES LICATA
TRAINING OFFICER/DC PAUL J. NORWOOD

February 16, 2015

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to you as the Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director of the East Haven Fire Department in regards to the "just cause" Raised bill #6776 for this session. As I am sure you are aware there is similar language in the bills relating to the Fire Marshals and for the Police Chiefs in our state already. The reason for my request is not to change Section 7-302 merely to put the fire chiefs in line with the others but for the following reasons. I have been active in the fire service first as a volunteer firefighter for seven years, being hired as a career firefighter and progressing through the career ranks over the last 31 years all in the same combination department serving the last decade as the chief. I have watched many changes occur in our service over the years with the duties of a firefighter and especially that of the chief expand in a myriad of ways. I as well as my fellow chiefs have all taken up the challenge well beyond our comfort zone to advance ourselves at the risk of failure with the goal of better protecting our personnel and the public that we serve. We all need the very best intentioned and strongest leaders among us that are most capable of defending the mission and the associated costs to our public without constantly worrying about our own employment and allowing that to dilute our vision. The step from being a union member to standing alone is a scary one in itself and in at least my case was a very difficult decision as I do have a family to support and I feel it is the same for my fellow chiefs. The risk that a proper decision for my employees or for my public can result in a loss of my employment without actually doing anything wrong is unconscionable. In the current atmosphere where the public scrutiny seems to be limitless at times I feel strongly that the fire service will lose out, where some of our brightest individuals coming up the ranks will not chose to take the chance of becoming the chief as the risk to his or her own employment outweighs the will try to improve department performance to our public in our very vital mission. We as fire chiefs are now expected to have the answer and be prepared for an entirely new mission which is added every couple of years along with all of the corresponding training and expertise. This proposed change will not stop the removal of a chief when justified yet allow us to focus our attention to our ever-changing mission while staying neutral in the field of local politics.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Douglas F. Jackson
Fire Chief /EMD
East Haven Fire Department