

FTR

## West Thompson Fire Department

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On behalf of West Thompson Fire Department

Testimony in support of **S.B. No. 233, An Act Adding Volunteer Fire Departments and Volunteer Firefighters to the Partnership Plan**

The Insurance & Real Estate Committee

March 3, 2015

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and members of the Insurance & Real Estate Committee. I offer this testimony in support of **S.B. No. 233, An Act Adding Volunteer Fire Departments and Volunteer Firefighters to the Partnership Plan.**

Volunteer firefighters serve a vital role in their communities, and they do so without pay or expectation of benefits. S.B. 233 would allow volunteer fire departments to apply to the partnership plan through the State of Connecticut for health coverage for their firefighters.

Access to quality health care would stand as recognition of the tremendous service and selflessness of volunteer fire departments and the individuals who serve the community. Further, access to this benefit may incentivize greater volunteerism within the community.

I am extremely appreciative of the efforts Senator Flexer and Representative Rosati in their support for volunteer firefighters in CT. It is getting more difficult to recruit and retain members and this effort would help dramatically. 62% of firefighters in CT are volunteer and 23% are mostly volunteer.<sup>1</sup> I strongly recommend you visit your local volunteer firehouse and speak to the great men and women that work and train hard to tirelessly protect us all. These brave men and women answer calls 24/7 voluntarily! S.B. 233 would help show appreciation for all their hard work, while providing access to quality health care.

Thank you for your attention, and I ask you to please support this important legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/census/summary.cfm#h>