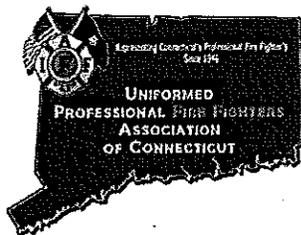


UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT
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Good afternoon, Honorable Chairmen Rep Tercyak, Sen. Gomes, Honorable members of the Labor and Public Employee Committee, my name is Richard Hart. I represent the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut which represents 60 Local affiliates of the International Association of Firefighters. Membership in the UPPFA is comprised of approximately 4,000 Union firefighters in Connecticut.

I am submitting testimony in **opposition** of HB 6931 An Act Concerning New Municipal Employees and the Municipal Employees Retirement System.

By changing the defined benefit program to a defined contribution plan in MERS, employee rights and benefits are further eroded, while the municipalities are relieved of their duty to provide for their employees. A 401K or similar investment avenue is subject to the drastic fluxuations of the stock market, along with the fact that municipalities may or may not be held to contribute to the fund. With a defined benefit plan, municipalities are often times bound by their charters to maintain a level of contribution to ensure appropriate funding of the pension system. There is no guarantee municipalities will maintain the percentage contribution necessary to provide for their employees. Also, once an employee retires, their investment follows them and may not be sufficient to provide for them because employees are not enrolled in a pension system. The municipalities are only looking to be relieved of any liability in the proper investment of funds and the providing of a retirement plan for their employees.

Please do not move HB 6931 forward.

Richard Hart

Richard Hart

DIRECTOR
Legislative/Political Affairs