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March 10, 2015

Honorable Terry B. Gerantana  
Honorable Matthew Ritter  
Honorable Joseph J. Crisco  
Honorable Emmett D. Riley  
Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee

By way of this memo, please permit me to provide written testimony *in favor of* Proposed Bill 5911 ***AN ACT CONCERNING A RESTRUCTURING OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD.***

As Chief of the East Hartford Fire Department, I am responsible for delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to the residents and visitors of our community. I have been certified as an emergency medical service provider for nearly 30 years and have worked as a provider in rural and suburban environment during that period.

This bill provides the opportunity to restructure and improve the performance of an advisory board that provides strategic guidance for the state's emergency medical services. As written, this raised bill essentially mirrors a 2012 legislative proposal from the EMS Advisory Board (5526SL-LCO#2921) which was endorsed by its Chair (who remains Chair today).

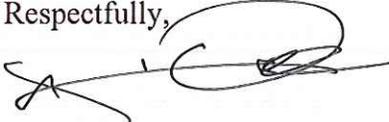
The current Board has not, to my knowledge, ever articulated a clear vision for Emergency Medical Services in the State of Connecticut. It is difficult to understand, and plan for, changes when the very board who is supposed to set the goal, has not. This includes how it plans to ensure Connecticut meets the National Scope of Practice as well as changes in the EMS system demanded by the evolution of healthcare. A leaner and more effective Advisory Board would be more apt to reach consensus more quickly and effectively move forward Emergency Medical Services in Connecticut.

Analysis of other State's EMS Advisory Boards or Commissions has shown that **none** are of the size of Connecticut's. Most number in the area of 20 members or less. These groups are typically comprised of EMS providers, EMS agency managers, Medical Directors, EMS educators, Fire Chiefs, Hospital Administrators, Association representatives and other interested stakeholders. Understand that this proposal is not, as some may characterize it, an attempt for the fire service to 'take over' the Advisory Board. Over 70 percent of the state's population receives emergency medical services

from their fire department. Despite this overwhelming number, we understand the need to partner with, not dominate, the EMS Advisory board and other groups in order to improve EMS in Connecticut.

I thank you for your consideration of my comments and ask that you support this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Oates", with a large circular flourish above the name.

John H. Oates

Fire Chief

East Harford, CT