



Connecticut Fire Marshals Association

Fire Marshal Kevin J Kowalski - Legislative rep.
kkowalski@simsburyfd.org 860-658-1971

HB 5379 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR ASSAULT OF AN OFF-DUTY POLICE OFFICER

Committee on Public Safety and Security

February 17, 2015

Good morning Representative Dargan and Senator Larson and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Kevin Kowalski, Fire Marshal of Simsbury and Legislative Committee Chair for the CT Fire Marshal's Association. The CFMA represents over 300 members.

I am here today to speak in favor of proposed HB 5379. This bill would add off-duty police officers to the felony assault statutes. I would like to respectfully request that this Committee consider amending this bill to bill add Fire Marshals and Deputy Fire Marshals who are reasonably identified as such, to the existing list of public safety officials currently identified in 53a167c. This rule states that an assault on the current list of public safety officials is a Class C felony. During the 2014 session, HB 5388 passed this committee and the house that provided this protection for Fire Marshals and Deputy Fire Marshals.

There is some confusion as to whether or not a Fire Marshal is covered under the "firefighter" title. It may be the case when a Fire Marshal is employed directly by a fire department. However, we believe those employed by a municipality may not be covered. In 2014, an assault occurred in Stamford against two Fire Marshals inspecting an establishment. While this person was charged under the above noted statute, it was only because the FMO personnel were members of a fire department.



Connecticut Fire Marshals Association

Fire Marshal Kevin J Kowalski - Legislative rep.
kkowalski@simsburyfd.org 860-658-1971

Our organization received many calls of concern from Fire Marshals that are not affiliated with a fire department and cannot be classified as a firefighter. They work directly for the municipality. This is prevalent in small communities where the town has a Volunteer Fire company that is incorporated. Those who are employed by municipalities represent approximately 60% of Fire Marshals and Deputy Fire Marshals.

Adding Fire Marshals and Deputy Fire Marshals to HB 5379 would go a long way to protect the public safety officials that are working to protect the citizens through inspections and investigations.

I thank you for your support of this bill.