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Chairmen Gomes and Tercyak, Vice Chairwoman Osten, Vice Chairman Esposito, and Ranking Members Hwang and Rutigliano and Distinguished Members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee,

I urge your support for **H.B. 5262 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR CURRENT AND FORMER UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF PAID OR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS.**

I want to be very clear. The current language in this original bill will not be the final product.

Last session, a similar bill was introduced and passed by the House of Representatives, but not without a lot of work along the way. This session, that same work has continued throughout the year. More importantly, there have been multiple organizations discussing the content of the bill. Connecticut Conference of Municipalities' (CCM), Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), House Republicans through Representative Rutigliano, Senate Republicans through Senator Hwang, House Democrats, Senate Democrats, firefighters, volunteer firefighters, fire marshals, Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA), Workers Compensation and various private insurance companies have all come to the table to develop a solution that can benefit our firefighters while not putting too much of a burden on our municipalities.

The bipartisan cooperation between these organizations and legislators has been unprecedented and demonstrates the commitment Connecticut has to its firefighters. Science has proven specific linkages between various types of cancer and chemicals encountered during firefighting. The legislation I kindly ask you to support would help

the firefighters during their time of need while not putting too much encumbrance on the state or municipalities.

I also would like to share two notes with you that I received just this morning. The first is from **Diana McClure of Fairfield:**

I am writing to ask that you please support rising Bill 5262, that would provide Worker Compensation benefits for Firefighter's who have become ill due to their service as a Firefighter in Connecticut.

My brother was a Westport firefighter's for 25 years, and was disability retired from that job about 12 years ago, when he became ill with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia, which he strongly believes is the result of exposure to toxic chemicals, including formaldehyde, and others, at the site of fires he work at.

The disease cut his career short, and has affected his life in many ways over the years.

If there is anything, or anyone else I can do to lend support to this bill, please let me know.

We were sadly disappointed when the last session ended with the bill un passed. We hope you can make it pass this term.

The second is from **Thomas Arnold of Monroe:**

We didn't quite make it last year I hope we do better this year.

If I can do anything to help please let me know. I am a retired firefighter who suffered from leukemia. I believe it was caused by formaldehyde a known carcinogen particular to leukemia a gas released at all fires.

I am grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important legislation and I welcome any questions.