Bill No.: HB-5125
Title: AN ACT INCREASING THE PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT FOR CERTAIN FIRST RESPONDERS.
Vote Date: 3/8/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/27/2019
File No.: 79

Disclaimer: The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.

SPONSORS OF BILL:
Committee on Planning and Development

CO-SPONSORS:
Rep. Irene Haines, 34th Dist.
Rep. Tom Delnicki, 14th Dist.
Sen. Norman Needleman, 33rd Dist.
Sen. John A. Kissel, 7th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:
Committee Substitute Bill No. 5125 increases the property tax abatement for certain first responders from one thousand dollars to one thousand five hundred dollars. The Committee Substitute Bill fleshes out the details of the Proposed Bill by offering a definition of certain first responders and setting a start date for the act if it passes. The Committee Substitute Bill intends to provide municipalities with the ability to increase financial incentives for Connecticut’s first responders and support the retention and recruitment of these individuals.

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RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Dave Yaccarino, 87th Dist.:
Representative Yaccarino urges the Committee to vote favorably because he believes the legislation would financially incentivize firefighters in Connecticut to continue to serve their communities. The Representative sites the fact that the majority of Connecticut firefighters are volunteers and notes that he introduced legislation to the Committee this session that would allow municipalities to offer up to $3,000 in tax reductions for Connecticut firefighters.

James M. Hayden, East Granby First Selectman:
Hayden argues in favor of the bill, but urges legislators to increase the maximum tax abatement that municipalities can offer to firefighters to $3,000. Hayden says that $3,000 would equate to approximately 46% of the average real estate tax bill in East Granby. He says that this tax deduction ought to be offered because providing this financial assistance to volunteer firefighters will help departments like the one in his town with recruitment, retention, and serve as a form of recognition of the service that these individuals provide.

Paul Januszewski, Fire Chief:
Citing a decade-spanning decline in firefighters in his town of North Haven from 115 then to 45 today, Paul urges the committee to vote favorably so that the tax abatement can increase and help with recruitment, retention, and lessen the financial burdens faced by first responders in Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Advocacy Manager of Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM):
Speaking on behalf of CCM, Donna urges the committee to oppose this legislation, citing what she refers to as a "de facto mandate" that would pressure towns and cities to comply with the new standard. Donna suggests that the committee should consider legislation that would provide an income tax credit, which she says would be a more equitable solution.

Reported by: Emmet Teran                         Date: March 22, 2019