UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT
AFFILIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS
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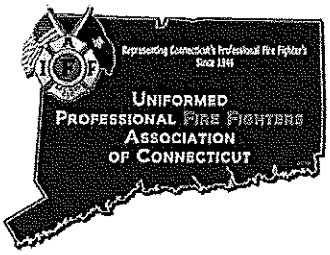

Rick Hart
Director
Legislative/Political Affairs

Testimony in Support of:
SB 164
HB 6916
HB 6929

Good afternoon, Honorable Chairwomen Rep. Porter and Sen. Kushner, members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut represent 60 Local affiliates of the International Association of Firefighters, comprising approximately 4,000 Union firefighters in Connecticut. The UPFFA **SUPPORTS**:

SB 164 - An Act Including Certain Mental Or Emotional Impairments Within The Definition Of "personal Injury" Under The Workers' Compensation Statute

According to the International Association of Firefighters, "Research suggests that the prevalence of PTSD among fire fighters is roughly twice that of the general population and comparable to the prevalence found in cohorts of recent combat veterans, which ranges from 10.1 – 13.8%. A study of 402 professional fire fighters from Germany found a PTSD prevalence of 18.2%, with years on duty as the strongest predictor of PSTD symptoms. The longer a fire fighter is on duty, the more exposure they have to traumatic events throughout the course of their careers. Corneil et al. studied PTSD symptomology in a large population of U.S. and Canadian professional fire fighters and paramedics. The prevalence of PTSD among U.S. and Canadian fire fighters was reported at 22.2% and 17.3%, respectively. PTSD and the behavioral health crisis in public safety are real and have been recognized by many in the Legislature as an issue that needs addressing. The UPFFA appreciates Majority Leader Duff and Sen. Osten for filing this worthwhile legislation. The UPFFA and CCM have been working collaboratively over the past year to come to an agreement to address and cover behavioral health and PTSD and we are there. This will prove to be a landmark piece of legislation that everyone involved can take pride in the fact that firefighters and police officers are covered in a responsible manner, taking into consideration fiscal issues facing Connecticut's municipalities.

Walter M. O'Connor, *President Emeritus*
Santo J. Alleano, Jr., *Vice President Emeritus*
Raymond D. Shea, *President Emeritus*
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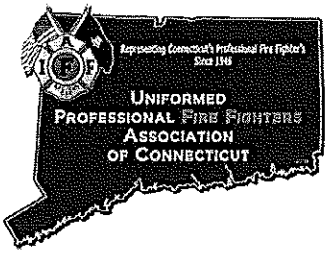

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HB 6916 - AN ACT EXPANDING REMEDIES AND POTENTIAL LIABILITY FOR UNREASONABLY CONTESTED OR DELAYED WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS

Injured employees often times meet stiff resistance in the delivery of care in a timely fashion. Weeks go by wasted in expensive physical therapy only to discover surgery is required that could have time, money and frustration. Expediting claims and treatment will ensure timely recovery which benefits both the employee and the employer; for the employee, healthier outcomes, and for the employer, a return of a productive employee. Placing an undue burden on the employee by extending treatment time is an inconvenience and at times, painful. An injured employee should not have to be concerned with losing their job as a result of an injury and delayed treatment.

HB 6929 - An Act Allowing Certain State And Municipal Workers And First Responders To File Workers' Compensation Claims For Injuries Sustained While Traveling To And From Work

The UPFFA supports this bill to protect our members in their travel to and from work. Often times they respond directly to incidences or come upon an emergency incident and render care. They should be covered under Workers' Compensation to protect and ensure our members get the necessary coverage so they can continue to provide the service they are sworn to deliver.

Therefore, as an organization, the UPFFA supports and requests SB 164, HB 6916, and HB 6929 move forward.

Thank you,

Richard Hart

Rick Hart

Director, Legislative and Political Affairs

Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut

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