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sSB-313

AN ACT CONCERNING ADOPTION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY CANCER
RELIEF BENEFITS FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

As Amended by Senate "A" (LCO 6291)

Senate Calendar No.: 266

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: See Below

Municipal Impact: See Below

Explanation

Section 1 of the bill requires fire departments with a population of more than fifty thousand to ensure that each firefighter is equipped with at least two sets of turnout gear. Municipalities with paid fire departments will incur costs beginning in FY 24 associated with providing this equipment if they do not already do so. Costs will vary based on the number of professional firefighters in each department; the gear typically costs about \$3,000 per set.

Municipalities with a population of less than fifty thousand are exempt from purchasing turn-out equipment for firefighters provided they are equipped with all advanced cleaning washer and extractor capabilities as specified in NFPA 1851. This results in a potential cost to municipalities that have a population of less than fifty thousand if they do not have the cleaning washer and extractor capabilities as specified in the bill.

Section 2 of the bill (1) establishes a rebuttable presumption that a paid or volunteer firefighter diagnosed with cancer got the disease in the course of employment due to exposures specific to duties performed

as a firefighter and (2) makes the illness covered under workers' compensation law. This results in a potential cost to various state agencies and municipalities to the extent that additional employee claims are filed and these employees meet the other conditions of the bill.

Section 3 of the bill requires the Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC) to (a) maintain a record of all firefighters' workers' compensation claims made due to a cancer diagnosis and (b) report a summary of the records to the Labor Committee each year, which results in no fiscal impact because the agency already has the staffing and expertise to do so.

Sections 4 & 10 of the bill make firefighters eligible for benefits from the existing firefighters cancer relief program (or any other wage replacement program) while also receiving workers' compensation benefits for a work-related cancer diagnosis, and appropriate \$1.2 million to the firefighter cancer relief account in FY 23 for this purpose.

Section 5 of the bill makes surviving spouses or other dependents eligible to continue to receive accident, health, or life insurance while they are eligible for, or receiving, workers' compensation benefits. This results in a potential cost of an indeterminate amount to various state agencies and municipalities to the extent that the employer offers such insurance, the claimant is eligible for or granted workers' compensation benefits, and the claimant has a surviving spouse and/or dependents.

Section 6 of the bill requires the Comptroller to conduct a feasibility study on providing pension benefits to firefighters in circumstances when the required pension service years are not met due to early retirement resulting from a qualifying cancer diagnosis, which results in no fiscal impact because the agency already has the staffing and expertise to do so.

Sections 7 through 9 of the bill clarify that volunteer fire departments and volunteer ambulance companies fall within the state's Occupational Safety and Health Act (Conn-OSHA), unless it is demonstrated that they

are under federal OSHA jurisdiction. This does not result in any fiscal impact as the Department of Labor has historically considered such entities within its jurisdiction.

The bill also requires municipalities to contribute to the firefighters' cancer relief account in the amount of \$10 per firefighter, resulting in a cost to municipalities with professional fire departments that will vary based on the number of career firefighters that serve such municipalities.

Senate "A" (1) changes the effective date of Section 1 from July 2022 to July 2023 eliminating the potential cost to municipalities in FY 23; (2) exempts municipalities with a population of less than fifty thousand from purchasing turn-out equipment, which results in potential savings to certain municipalities; (3) adds provisions requiring municipalities to contribute to the firefighters' cancer relief account, resulting in a potential cost to municipalities; (4) strikes sections 2, 5, and 7 to 10 and the associated fiscal impact.

The preceding Fiscal Impact statement is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for the purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.