



April 5th, 2019

Everyone,

**The next Fire/EMS Caucus meeting will be on April 11th, 2019 at 10:30 am in Room 1E at the Legislative Office Building. We ask all members of the Fire Service to attend Fire EMS Caucus Meetings at the LOB in Class A uniform when schedules permit.** We expect that “The PTSD Bill”, all bills related to the Fire Service that have Joint Favorably passed out of the respective legislative committees and funding for Regional Fire School building projects to be on the caucus meeting agenda.

**We ask all of our CSFA members to continue to urge their respective legislators (especially the newly-elected) to join the Fire/EMS Caucus and attend the meetings during the 2019 session. The goal of the bipartisan caucus co-chairs is to pull together greater support for us and to create better understanding among legislators of issues related to the Fire Service. All legislators are welcome to participate and caucus meetings are open to the public.**

This week, the members of the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations also heard a presentation from Chief Rick Hart of the UPPFA on “The PTSD Bill” **S.B. 164 AN ACT INCLUDING CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "PERSONAL INJURY" UNDER THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATUTES.** Please be aware that the bill language available online at this time is not the latest version of the bill. The latest language has yet to be filed publicly by the Legislative Commissioner’s Office (LCO). We expect that filing with the latest language to be available online any day now – most likely near the end of next week. As soon as the latest language is available to the public, I will post a special Legislative Update on the listserv with all of the details. We also expect to schedule that legislative leadership will schedule a new conference to reveal the bill’s details and, most likely, this will be on very short notice. We will need members of the Fire Service to attend this news conference to show support for “PTSD Bill” and for the legislators and other officials who have helped to date.

The Joint Council also discussed **H.B. 5658 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RED AND BLUE LIGHTS ON VEHICLES OPERATED BY POLICE OFFICERS** (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/TOB/h/pdf/2019HB-05658-R01-HB.PDF>). The suggestion was made that the proposed legislation be amended to exempt police

vehicles, fire apparatus and municipal support vehicles from any additional restriction with regard to the usage of red and blue lights.

There was also a public hearing this week on **H.B. 7394** AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN A FIRST RESPONDER AND A PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/TOB/h/pdf/2019HB-07394-R00-HB.PDF>). Click on the following link from the Connecticut Network (CT-N) to view public testimony on the bill:

<http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/ctnplayer.asp?odID=16185>

- Testimony by Pastor Stephen Johnson by Black Rock Church in Fairfield begins at time code 19:30
- Testimony by Chief Rick Hart begins at time code 2:24:50

Please be aware that **H.B. 5125** AN ACT INCREASING THE PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT FOR CERTAIN FIRST RESPONDERS. (<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/FC/pdf/2019HB-05125-R000079-FC.PDF>) may benefit your local municipality. Consider asking your legislator to support this proposed legislation. Lt. Curt Andrews of the North Haven Fire Department has been working on this issue and writes the following:

The Town of North Haven is proactively reviewing all of the benefits provided to volunteer firefighters, and looking to provide incentives to retain and recruit. The North Haven Fire Commission proposed an increase of the abatement to \$3000 per year, but unfortunately, State Statute limits it to \$1000. We approached Senator Fasano and State Representative Yaccarino and they sponsored HB 6124. The Planning and Development Committee decided to raise HB 5125 instead and held a public hearing on the bill February 27th. I testified in favor of the bill and asked that the committee consider a higher dollar amount of abatement, or even consider leaving the dollar amount up to individual municipalities to decide. The committee unanimously passed the substitute bill which raises the abatement limit to \$1500 July 1, 2019 and \$2000 July 1, 2021.

It is important to note that the dollar amount has not been changed in years, and property taxes have certainly increased, so this is long overdue. Additionally, it is important to note that this legislation is completely permissive in nature. Towns MAY adopt this, or they may not.

As volunteer numbers are decreasing, we need to do whatever we can to retain and recruit more. A more robust property tax abatement will help.

**Additionally, I ask again that if you plan as a member of the Fire Service to submit oral or written testimony about any proposed legislation, please contact CSFA President John Carew ([carew@csfa.org](mailto:carew@csfa.org)), Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations Chairman Chief Dave Billings ([billingsd@manchesterct.gov](mailto:billingsd@manchesterct.gov)) or myself ([collins@csfa.org](mailto:collins@csfa.org)) in advance so we can keep track and be sure that we remain unified with regard to our support for or opposition to any bill.**

I have attached an updated CSFA House JFed Bills Status Report. (Please note that there is one typo on this week's status report – HB 5638 is an error and will be replaced by HB 5538 next week).

If you would like to receive a copy of this update by email, **please contact me by email and I will add your name to my distribution list. Please put "CSFA Update Request" as the subject of your email. If you have already requested and I missed it, I apologize, sometimes the email gets thick on this end. Please submit again with the subject "CSFA Update Request".**

Sincerely,

Leon Collins

Legislative Representative

**The Connecticut State Firefighters Association**

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