

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7199

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/11/2025

File No.:

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:

[Sen. Paul Cicarella, 34th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Patrick S. Boyd, 50th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Kathy Kennedy, 119th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to give fire departments throughout the state the tools needed to maintain current members and to attract new staff. Firefighters accept the call of duty to protect the people in their communities daily. Firefighters are not only putting out fires they are also maintaining buildings and assisting with community initiatives. But due to countless economic shifts many firefighters are transferring to fire departments that offer greater financial security, housing opportunities and other incentives.

Transferring to a new department for stability is the only way many firefighters can create better lives for themselves and their families. However, when incoming firefighters get trained and then decide to transfer to a new department, it creates a financial burden on the department they have left. That department has lost funding, now needs to find a new replacement and cover the cost to train them. Many departments aim is to offer exceptional benefits to reduce the loss of staff and create a work life balance but lack the budget to do it.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Nandini Natarajan CEO-Executive Director Connecticut Housing Finance Authority](#)

Mrs. Natarajan appreciates the purpose of the bill, but request section 1 of the bill be removed. She believes that the way this section is written it may cause negative effects in the long run. She states that she is ready to work with legislatures to come up with to better way to offer loan products to firefighters.

[Bill Buckbee State Representative](#)

Representative Buckbee supports this bill because fire fighters are important assets in communities. This is a demanding job that requires firefighters to put their lives on the line for their community. He states that some of the challenge with retaining fire fighters is due to the increasing cost of housing, salary, and family life.

[Betsy Gara Executive Director Connecticut Council of Small Towns \(COST\)](#)

Mrs. Gara expresses support for this bill because the benefits it offers will help address the shortage of firefighters throughout the state. She also expresses that the taskforce will help the state identify the shortage of firefighters and EMS personnel.

[Mike Muszynski Connecticut Conference of Municipalities](#)

Mr. Muszynski expresses support for the bill. Especially section 7 which calls for a task force to study the shortage of firefighters and EMS personnel. Section 8 which would require municipalities to reimburse the cost of firefighter entry level training certification. He also states that even though it not in the bill he is asking for more funding for fire schools and highly trained instructors.

[Steven Hoffman Colchester Fire & EMS Chair Joint Council](#)

Mr. Hoffman supports the bills firefighters are doing the hard work that many people cannot do. Firefighters take the time to acquire all the necessary training need to save the lives in community. This is why the bill recruitment initiatives are needed because it shows firefighters that the hard work, they put in everyday is appreciated.

[Anthony Fabrizi Fire Chief -Emergency Management Director](#)

Mr. Fabrizi supports this bill but expresses concern with the financial lost departments experience when a fire fighter leaves one department for another. He states when a department has invested in a candidate training then the candidate leaves there is no way for a department to be reimbursed. He also states that when fire departments accept a lateral transfer, they often gain a financial advantage because that individual who is a trained CT certified firefighter. He suggests creating a system where fire departments who pay for candidates training to be reimbursed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Rena Lewis

Date: 3/25/25