

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1239

AN ACT CONCERNING A FALLEN OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER FUND AND PROVIDING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE TO SURVIVORS OF A

Title: FIREFIGHTER KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/11/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.](#)

[Rep. Robin E. Comey, 102nd Dist.](#)

[Rep. Fred Gee, 126th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

The committee passed S.B. 341 in 2024 after the deaths of Bristol Police officers Lt. Dustin W. DeMonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy in October 2022. The first family to receive benefits from this fund were the family of Detective Robert C. Garten who was killed in a hit and run traffic stop in 2023.

This session the committee seeks to pass SB 1239 which will provide the families of fallen officers with \$100,000 and extended health insurance coverage for five years. This is particularly necessary for families like Lt. Dustin DeMonte's who left behind two young children and an expecting wife, who gave birth to a baby girl soon after his passing.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Changes the name of the fund from "Fallen Officer Fund" to "Fallen Hero Fund" and added Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics to the list of first responders.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Comptroller Sean Scanlon – State of Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller](#)

Comptroller Sean Scanlon Supports this bill and suggests a change of title from The Fallen Officer and Firefighter Fund to 'the "Fallen Hero Fund," so that it is a more-encompassing title.' Comptroller Scanlon also recommends adding other Emergency Medical technicians and Paramedics to the list of eligible first responders.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Peter Brown, President Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut

Supports this bill but suggests that changing the name of the fund to include Fire fighters is a good decision as they are also first responders who face great danger in the dispensation of their duties. President Brown cites the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, reporting that 2023 saw 89 line-of-duty deaths for fire fighter in the United States. He goes on to explain that in Connecticut, we have tragically lost four firefighters in the line of duty in the past 10 years and those families deserved the same respect, support, and honor, first responders like police officers receive.

Mike Muszynski, Member of Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Supports the bill but asks that the committee consider the impact of the provision which stipulates that the benefits be provided for a reasonable amount of time, on volunteer fire departments, especially those that are independent from their host municipality. CCM also asks to include a provision to allow a department or municipality to provide coverage outside of the Partnership Plan which provides similar benefits. CCM also asks for an exemption in providing this coverage for the instance where the surviving family member was the provider of the health insurance.

John Carew, Legislative Consultant, Connecticut Fire Fighters Association

John Carew is the legislative consultant and past president of the Connecticut Fire Fighters Association, an organization of over 20,000 members, which seeks to educate its members and the public about issues Fire Fighters face. Mr. Carew the supports this bill because it would help to alleviate financial burden on grieving families.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Geva Tinker

Date: 3/28/25