



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 308**

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 410

*Senate, April 1, 2026*

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through SEN. GASTON of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING FIREFIGHTER CANCER.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 3-122a of the 2026 supplement to the general  
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  
3 (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

4 (a) For purposes of this section:

5 (1) "Dependent child" means a child, whether by blood or adoption,  
6 of a first responder who (A) is under the age of twenty-two and was  
7 dependent on the earnings of such first responder at the time of such  
8 first responder's death, provided a child shall not be considered  
9 dependent if such child provides more than half of such child's own  
10 support, is married or is legally adopted by another person, or (B) is any  
11 age and is physically or mentally incapacitated and was dependent on  
12 the earnings of such first responder at the time of such first responder's  
13 death.

14 (2) "Emergency medical technician" has the same meaning as  
15 provided in section 20-206jj.

16 (3) "Firefighter" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-313g.

17 (4) "Firefighter cancer death" means the death of a firefighter who (A)  
18 was diagnosed with any condition of cancer affecting the skin, brain,  
19 skeletal system, digestive system, endocrine system, respiratory system,  
20 lymphatic system, reproductive system, urinary system or  
21 hematological system resulting in such firefighter's death, and (B)  
22 would be entitled to compensation or benefits pursuant to section 7-  
23 313p.

24 [(4)] (5) "First responder" means an emergency medical technician,  
25 firefighter, paramedic or police officer.

26 [(5)] (6) "Killed in the line of duty" means the death of a first  
27 responder while engaged in the performance of such first responder's  
28 duties, resulting from an incident, an accident or violence that caused  
29 such death or caused injuries that were the direct or proximate cause of  
30 such first responder's death, including any (A) death that is determined  
31 to be occupationally related by a workers' compensation insurance  
32 carrier, an employer to whom a certificate of self-insurance has been  
33 issued pursuant to section 31-248 or an administrative law judge for  
34 workers' compensation purposes under chapter 568, and (B) firefighter  
35 cancer death. "Killed in the line of duty" does not include the death of a  
36 first responder through such first responder's own wanton or wilful act.

37 [(6)] (7) "Paramedic" has the same meaning as provided in section 20-  
38 206jj.

39 [(7)] (8) "Police officer" has the same meaning as provided in section  
40 7-294a.

41 [(8)] (9) "Surviving family" means any person who is a surviving  
42 spouse, surviving dependent child, surviving child who is not a  
43 dependent child or surviving parent of a first responder killed in the line  
44 of duty, or a surviving individual listed on such first responder's most

45 recent beneficiary form on file with such first responder's employer.

46 (b) (1) There is established a fund to be known as the "Fallen Hero  
47 Fund", which shall be a separate, nonlapsing fund. The fund may  
48 contain any moneys required by law to be deposited in the fund. [and  
49 shall be held by the Treasurer separate and apart from all other moneys,  
50 funds and accounts.] The interest derived from the investment of the  
51 fund shall be credited to the fund. [Amounts] Except as provided in  
52 subdivision (2) of this subsection, amounts in the fund may be expended  
53 by the Comptroller for purposes of payments pursuant to subsection (c)  
54 of this section and reimbursement of municipalities pursuant to  
55 subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 3-123eee, as amended by this  
56 act. [Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of any fiscal year shall  
57 be carried forward in the fund for the fiscal year next succeeding.]

58 (2) Any payment made pursuant to subsection (c) of this section or  
59 reimbursement provided to a municipality pursuant to subdivision (2)  
60 of subsection (c) of section 3-123eee, as amended by this act, due to a  
61 firefighter cancer death shall be paid from the firefighters cancer relief  
62 account established pursuant to section 7-313h.

63 (c) (1) After receiving notice, in a form and manner as determined by  
64 the Comptroller, from an individual who is a member of the surviving  
65 family of a first responder who was killed in the line of duty, the  
66 Comptroller shall pay, within available appropriations, a lump sum  
67 death benefit totaling one hundred thousand dollars from the fund  
68 established [in] pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this  
69 section to such surviving family, in accordance with regulations  
70 adopted pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, provided the  
71 surviving family of a first responder killed in the line of duty shall not  
72 receive more than one such lump sum death benefit. Payments shall be  
73 made to surviving families in the order in which notices are received  
74 until the amount in such fund is depleted.

75 (2) Any payment made pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection  
76 shall be in addition to any other benefits for which individuals of such  
77 first responder's surviving family are eligible and such payments shall

78 not be reduced or offset due to any other benefits, including, but not  
79 limited to, workers' compensation or other survivor benefits.

80 (3) Any person who would be entitled to compensation or benefits  
81 pursuant to section 7-313p on or after October 1, 2023, due to a  
82 firefighter cancer death shall be entitled to payment pursuant to  
83 subdivision (1) of this subsection, provided such person otherwise  
84 satisfies all requirements of this section necessary to receive such  
85 payment.

86 (d) Not later than July 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the  
87 Comptroller shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of  
88 section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly  
89 having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security. Such  
90 report shall include a list of all expenditures made from the fund  
91 established [by] pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this  
92 section during the prior year and from the firefighters cancer relief  
93 account established pursuant to section 7-313h, the current balance of  
94 such fund and account and information regarding additional amounts  
95 needed for such fund or account.

96 (e) The Comptroller shall adopt regulations in accordance with the  
97 provisions of chapter 54 to implement the provisions of this section,  
98 including, but not limited to, application procedures and criteria for  
99 awarding grants among individuals who are members of the surviving  
100 family, with priority given to awards that would benefit a dependent  
101 child or children and a spouse who is a member of the surviving family.  
102 The Comptroller may implement policies and procedures necessary to  
103 implement the provisions of this section while in the process of adopting  
104 such regulations, provided notice of intent to adopt such regulations is  
105 published on the eRegulations System not later than twenty days after  
106 the date of implementation of such policies and procedures. Any  
107 policies and procedures implemented under this subsection shall be  
108 valid until the time such regulations are adopted.

109 Sec. 2. Section 3-123aaa of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes  
110 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*

111 1, 2026):

112 As used in this section and sections 3-123bbb to 3-123hhh, inclusive:

113 (1) "Firefighter cancer death" has the same meaning as provided in  
114 section 3-122a, as amended by this act.

115 [(1)] (2) "First responder" has the same meaning as provided in  
116 section 3-122a, as amended by this act. [;]

117 [(2)] (3) "Health Care Cost Containment Committee" means the  
118 committee established in accordance with the ratified agreement  
119 between the state and the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition  
120 pursuant to subsection (f) of section 5-278.

121 [(3)] (4) "Killed in the line of duty" has the same meaning as provided  
122 in section 3-122a, as amended by this act.

123 [(4)] (5) "Nonprofit employee" means any employee of a nonprofit  
124 employer.

125 [(5)] (6) "Nonprofit employer" means (A) a nonprofit corporation,  
126 organized under 26 USC 501, as amended from time to time, that (i) has  
127 a purchase of service contract, as defined in section 4-70b, or (ii) receives  
128 fifty per cent or more of its gross annual revenue from grants or funding  
129 from the state, the federal government or a municipality or any  
130 combination thereof, or (B) an organization that is tax exempt pursuant  
131 to 26 USC 501(c)(5), as amended from time to time.

132 [(6)] (7) "Nonstate public employee" means any employee or elected  
133 officer of a nonstate public employer.

134 [(7)] (8) "Nonstate public employer" means a municipality or other  
135 political subdivision of the state, including a board of education, quasi-  
136 public agency or public library. A municipality and a board of education  
137 may be considered separate employers.

138 [(8)] (9) "Partnership plan" means a health care benefit plan offered  
139 by the Comptroller to (A) nonstate public employers or nonprofit

140 employers pursuant to section 3-123bbb, (B) graduate assistants at The  
141 University of Connecticut and The University of Connecticut Health  
142 Center, (C) postdoctoral trainees at The University of Connecticut and  
143 The University of Connecticut Health Center, (D) graduate fellows at  
144 The University of Connecticut and The University of Connecticut  
145 Health Center, and (E) graduate students of The University of  
146 Connecticut participating in university-funded internships as part of  
147 their graduate program.

148 [(9)] (10) "State employee plan" means a self-insured group health  
149 care benefits plan established under subsection (m) of section 5-259.

150 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 3-123eee of the 2026 supplement to the  
151 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
152 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

153 (c) (1) Each employer shall pay monthly the amount determined by  
154 the Comptroller, pursuant to this section, for coverage of its employees  
155 or its employees and retirees, as appropriate, under a partnership plan.  
156 An employer may require each covered employee to contribute a  
157 portion of the cost of such employee's coverage under the plan, subject  
158 to any collective bargaining obligation applicable to such employer,  
159 provided no contribution may be required of an individual receiving  
160 coverage as described in subsection (i) of section 3-123bbb.

161 (2) An employer making payments pursuant to subdivision (1) of this  
162 subsection for coverage under a partnership plan of an individual or  
163 individuals described in subsection (i) of section 3-123bbb shall be  
164 reimbursed by the Comptroller for the total cost of such payments from  
165 the Fallen Hero Fund established pursuant to subsection (b) of section  
166 3-122a, as amended by this act, except, if the reimbursement is due to a  
167 firefighter cancer death, such reimbursement shall be reimbursed from  
168 the firefighters cancer relief account established pursuant to section 7-  
169 313h.

170 Sec. 4. Subsection (j) of section 10a-105 of the 2026 supplement to the  
171 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu

172 thereof (Effective July 1, 2026):

173 (j) Said board of trustees may provide health care coverage for  
174 graduate assistants, postdoctoral trainees, graduate fellows and  
175 graduate student interns identified in subdivision [(8)] (9) of section 3-  
176 123aaa, as amended by this act, by enrolling such individuals in a  
177 partnership plan as defined in section 3-123aaa, as amended by this act.  
178 All premiums and expenses resulting from the participation of such  
179 individuals in the partnership plan shall be paid by the university. No  
180 such premiums or expenses shall be charged to the General Fund.

181 Sec. 5. (Effective July 1, 2026) Not later than October 1, 2026, the State  
182 Fire Marshal shall establish a one-year pilot program to reimburse  
183 firefighters, as defined in section 7-313g of the general statutes, who  
184 receive screening for cancers common to firefighters. The State Fire  
185 Marshal shall consult with a nonprofit organization with expertise in the  
186 field of cancer screening to determine which cancer screenings shall  
187 qualify for reimbursement pursuant to the pilot program. The pilot  
188 program shall be operated in one municipality with a population that is  
189 serviced by a volunteer fire department and one municipality with a  
190 population that is serviced by a paid fire department. On and after the  
191 effective date of this section, the State Fire Marshal shall accept  
192 applications from municipalities for participation in the pilot program,  
193 in a form and manner prescribed by the State Fire Marshal. Not later  
194 than January 1, 2028, the State Fire Marshal shall submit a report on the  
195 results of the pilot program, including any recommendations for  
196 continuation or expansion of the pilot program, to the joint standing  
197 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
198 relating to public safety and security, in accordance with the provisions  
199 of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2026	3-122a
Sec. 2	July 1, 2026	3-123aaa
Sec. 3	July 1, 2026	3-123eee(c)

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Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10a-105(j)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 5, "*Effective from passage*" was changed to "*Effective July 1, 2026*" for consistency with standard drafting conventions.

**PS**      *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do 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.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Admin. Serv., Dept.	GF - Cost	280,000	205,000
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>	GF - Cost	92,000	69,000

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill, which establishes a pilot program to reimburse firefighters receiving cancer screenings, results in an estimated General Fund cost of \$372,000 in FY 27 and at least \$274,000 in FY 28. The bill also provides the surviving family of a firefighter who has died from certain types of cancer a lump sum death benefit and health insurance coverage. The cost of providing these benefits will be paid out of the Firefighters Cancer Relief Account<sup>2</sup>. It is expected that the account's current balance and annual deposits will be sufficient to fund any additional costs resulting from this bill.

**Section 1**, which provides a lump sum death benefit totaling \$100,000 to a surviving family member or beneficiary for firefighters who have died from certain types of cancers, results in a potential cost to the

<sup>1</sup>The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.82% of payroll in FY 27.

<sup>2</sup> The Firefighters Cancer Relief Account is a separate non-lapsing account within the Department of Administrative Services. The account generally receives funds through state appropriations and investment income. The accounts current balance is \$8,770,081.

Firefighters Cancer Relief Account dependent on the frequency of qualifying cases.

**Sections 2-3**, which extend health insurance coverage under the state partnership plan to a surviving family of firefighters who have died from certain types of cancers, results in a net neutral fiscal impact to the state or municipalities facilitating coverage as the payments will be reimbursed by the Firefighters Cancer Relief Account. The cost to the Firefighters Cancer Relief Account is estimated to be \$44,000 per year per surviving family.

**Section 5** requires the State Fire Marshal within the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to create a pilot program, beginning October 1, 2026, and ending January 1, 2028, to reimburse firefighters who undergo cancer screening. This will require DAS to hire two new employees to administer the program resulting in salary and fringe costs of \$312,000 in FY 27 and at least \$234,000 in FY 28. In addition, reimbursements to firefighters taking part in the pilot program may cost up to \$60,000 in FY 27 and up to \$40,000 in FY 28. Reimbursement costs may vary significantly depending upon the types of screening tests covered and the firefighters chosen to participate in the program.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified in sections 2-3 above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 410*****AN ACT CONCERNING FIREFIGHTER CANCER.*****SUMMARY**

This bill extends certain benefits to survivors of firefighters who (1) die of certain cancers and (2) would be eligible for benefits from the firefighters cancer relief account (see BACKGROUND). Specifically, it:

1. extends Fallen Hero Fund benefits to these firefighters' surviving families or beneficiaries,
2. allows certain surviving family members who were covered under the firefighter's health care benefit plan at the time of their death to apply for or keep the coverage for a specified period of time, and
3. requires these benefits to be funded by the firefighters cancer relief account.

The bill also requires, by October 1, 2026, the State Fire Marshal to establish a one-year pilot program to reimburse firefighters in two municipalities who get screenings for cancers common to firefighters.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

**FALLEN HERO FUND BENEFITS**

By law, the Fallen Hero Fund pays \$100,000, within available appropriations, to the surviving families of first responders (emergency medical technicians, paid firefighters, paramedics, and police officers) killed in the line of duty or who sustained injuries that were the direct or proximate cause of the first responder's death.

The bill extends this same benefit to the surviving families of firefighters who:

1. were diagnosed with, and died from, any cancer affecting the skin or brain or the skeletal, digestive, endocrine, respiratory, lymphatic, reproductive, urinary, or hematological systems, and
2. would be entitled to benefits from the firefighters cancer relief account on or after October 1, 2023.

As under existing law for first responders killed in the line of duty, the “surviving family” is a surviving spouse, surviving child (whether dependent or not), or surviving parent of the firefighter, or the most recently listed surviving beneficiary on file with the employer.

Under the bill, payments to these surviving families must be made from the firefighters cancer relief account, rather than the Fallen Hero Fund as existing law requires for payments to surviving families of other first responders.

By law, the comptroller must annually report to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the expenditures made from the Fallen Hero Fund for the prior year, the fund’s current balance, and information on additional amounts needed for the fund. The bill expands this reporting requirement to also include the same information for the firefighters cancer relief account.

## **PARTNERSHIP PLAN COVERAGE**

By law, non-state public employers that provided coverage under a “partnership plan” (health benefit plans the comptroller offers to these and other employers) to a first responder who is killed in the line of duty must continue to provide the coverage to the survivors who were covered under the plan at the time of the first responder’s death. The bill requires these employers to provide this same coverage to survivors of firefighters who died of cancer, as described above. As under existing law, the coverage must continue for one year after the death and may be renewed annually for up to five years. The non-state public employer

must facilitate the coverage continuation and renewal.

As under existing law for first responders, under the bill, a nonstate public employer that did not provide coverage under a partnership plan to the firefighter who died of cancer must apply for coverage under a partnership plan for, and at the request of, the survivors who were receiving health care benefit coverage through a plan offered to the firefighter at the time of the death. The comptroller must accept the application on the terms and conditions applicable to the partnership plan for enrollment and coverage of the survivors for one year and the enrollment and coverage may be renewed annually for up to five years. The non-state public employer must help with the initiation and renewal of the enrollment and coverage.

By law, and under the bill, anyone receiving this coverage is exempt from paying monthly premiums for these plans and the comptroller must reimburse any employer making these premium payments. Under the bill, reimbursements due to a firefighter cancer death are paid from the firefighters cancer relief account, rather than the Fallen Hero Fund, as existing law requires for survivors of other first responders.

### **CANCER SCREENING PILOT PROGRAM**

By October 1, 2026, the State Fire Marshal must establish a one-year pilot program to reimburse paid firefighters in two municipalities who get cancer screenings for cancers that are common to firefighters. "Firefighter" refers to any (1) local or deputy fire marshal, fire investigator, fire inspector, and other classes of inspectors and investigators for whom the State Fire Marshal and the Codes and Standards Committee have jointly adopted minimum qualification standards, and (2) uniformed member of a paid municipal, state, or volunteer fire department.

The State Fire Marshal must consult with a nonprofit with expertise in the field of cancer screening to determine which screenings qualify for the pilot program's reimbursement. The pilot program must be operated in one municipality served by a volunteer fire department and

one municipality served by a paid fire department.

Starting July 1, 2026, the State Fire Marshal must accept applications from municipalities for participation in the pilot program on a form she prescribes. By January 1, 2028, the State Fire Marshal must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the program's results, including any recommendations for continuing or expanding it.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Firefighters Cancer Relief Account***

By law, the firefighters cancer relief account generally provides, for eligible paid firefighters diagnosed with certain cancers and die or become disabled because of it, (1) workers compensation benefits, (2) retirement and survivor benefits, and (3) certain disability benefits available from the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. To be eligible, the firefighter must be diagnosed with certain cancers, and (1) have shown no sign of cancer at a medical evaluation after entering into service, (2) not have smoked cigarettes for 15-years prior to the cancer diagnosis, (3) been employed for at least five years in certain firefighting positions, and (4) have submitted to annual medical screenings as recommended by their medical provider.

Beginning January 1, 2027, the account will be funded by a five cent per month fee, per service line, on each subscriber to a telephone service provider (including cell phone and Internet phone service providers, but not for certain prepaid cell phone services).

### ***Related Bills***

sHB 5460, §§ 10 & 11, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, (1) requires the state comptroller to establish and maintain a new unit to coordinate and spread information on public benefits available to firefighters, including fallen hero fund claims, and (2) correspondingly shifts, from the state treasurer to the state comptroller, responsibility for reimbursing employers for survivors health insurance benefits from the firefighters cancer relief account.

sHB 5003, §§ 11 & 12 favorably reported by the Labor and Public

Employees Committee, (1) expands partnership plan coverage to survivors of unpaid volunteer firefighters killed in the line of duty and (2) state employee insurance coverage to the survivors of unpaid volunteer firefighters and certain state marshals killed in the line of duty.

sHB 5403, favorably reported by the Public Safety and Security Committee, (1) expands partnership plan coverage to survivors of unpaid volunteer firefighters killed in the line of duty and (2) requires nonstate public employers to apply for partnership plan coverage for survivors of first responders or unpaid volunteer firefighters even if they were not employees of the non-state public employer at the time of their death.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/17/2026)