

# Labor and Public Employees Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5382 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT REQUIRING THE COMPTROLLER TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS AND

**Title:** FIREFIGHTERS.

**Vote Date:** 3/5/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/3/2026

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would task the Comptroller to study the existing health insurance benefits available to retired police officers and firefighters and identify any gaps that may be present. This is particularly needed as there have been some gaps in health insurance coverage for recently retired police and firefighters across different municipalities.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Michael Adams, Legislative and Political Assistant, AFSCME Council 4:** Mr. Adams explains that his union represents about 33,000 workers who have some of the toughest jobs, mentally and physically, which is why retiree health security matters. He states that in Connecticut the healthcare system is uneven, this bill works to clarify it. He explains that the unclarity makes it hard for young police officers to understand their future and makes it harder to recruit. For these reasons Mr. Adams is in support of the bill.

**Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO:** Mr. Hawthorne is in support of the bill. He states that Connecticut is facing a workforce shortage in police officers and firefighters and ensuring that these career paths remain attractive is the solution. He claims that healthcare coverage is important to recruitment and retention. He adds that this bill directs

the Comptroller to conduct a comprehensive study of first responder health insurance and retiree health insurance benefits and report findings to the General Assembly.

**Mario Pecirep, Sergeant, Bridgeport Police Department:** Mr. Pecirep states that in Connecticut law enforcement has some of the highest standards for employees, including high standards for psychological and physical assessments. However, officers put their bodies and life on the line over the course of their career. He explains that as a supervisor he gets many questions regarding this.

**Peter Brown, President, Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association:** Mr. Brown is in support of the bill. He explains that many firefighters face an unsustainable coverage gap between retirement and age 65. He adds the physical demands of firefighting make it difficult for many members to safely perform their duties into their mid-60s. Due to this, he says that firefighters are forced to make a difficult decision, either stay on the job until they are eligible or purchase private health insurance. He claims that this bill is a responsible approach by directing a formal study to document these gaps and assess potential solutions.

**Jeffrey Tomchik, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs, Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of CT (UPFFA):** Mr. Tomchik is in support of the bill because it creates mandates for the Comptroller to study health insurance coverage for retired police and firefighters. He explains that many first responders will retire early due to an injury, or they might reach retirement age before they are Medicare-eligible and find themselves facing. He states that people in these careers should not be left without adequate coverage in their own later years.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Zachary McKeown, Advocacy Manager, CCM:** Mr. McKeown states that the bill requires the Comptroller to conduct a study of health insurance coverage for police officers and firefighters. However, he is concerned that the findings could ultimately lead to new mandates on towns and cities. He adds that under Section 31-284b municipalities to continue providing health insurance to injured employees who can receive compensation benefits. This could result in a significant unfunded mandate. For these reasons Mr. McKeown urges the committee to require that the Comptroller's study include an analysis of the cost of providing this coverage borne by municipalities or the state.

**Reported by: Lawrence Sanchez & Olivia Buczak    Date: 03/16/2026**