

Public Safety and Security Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-410 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING FIREFIGHTER CANCER.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/12/2026
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill intends to make various revisions to the Fallen Hero Fund. This revision would alter the Fallen Hero Fund to extend benefits to survivors of firefighters whose death was caused by certain cancers and allow surviving family members or beneficiaries to apply for a benefit plan at the time of death or keep the coverage for specified timeframe, taking away uncertainty about medical coverage and expenses following an untimely death. This bill would also expand the program, opening it up to include volunteer departments, by stipulating that the State Fire Marshal establish a one-year pilot program in one volunteer and one paid municipality to reimburse firefighters who receive screenings for cancers common to firefighters.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, DAS: Ms. Gilman is in opposition of the bill. She states that section 5 of the bill will require the State Fire Marshal to create a one-year pilot program to reimburse firefighters for cancer screenings. She recognizes the intent of the bill however the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is not equipped to administer the responsibilities outlined.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

John Piscope, Representative, Connecticut General Assembly: Representative Piscope is in support of the bill. He states that the bill is important to helping firefighters get treatment for cancer. He adds that he has written some language that he hopes the committee will consider adding in lieu of section 5. He suggests the establishment of a State of Connecticut Cancer Screening Guideline and make annual adjustments based on science, data from cancer screenings, and peer journals. He

also suggests a creation of a firefighter Risk Assessment score, which will factor in the increase of a firefighter's risk of cancer. He adds that there should be a report about the number of Connecticut Firefighters with a new, delayed diagnosis or the death from cancer. He recommends Connecticut Fire Services, in conjunction with the State of Connecticut Division of Fire Services Fire Prevention and Control, within 5 years create a comprehensive Cancer Screening Plan for Firefighters. He asks that within 5 years, 11 chapters of the Lavender Ribbon Report are adopted. Rep. Piscopo urges the committee to pass the bill.

Jeffrey Bond, EMT, Burlington Volunteer Fire Department: Mr. Bond is in support of the bill. He states that the Daniels Report did a study in 2013 that concluded firefighters have a nine percent increase of cancer diagnosis and a 14 percent increase in cancer related deaths. He states that in 2022, the International Agency on Cancer Research (IARC) labeled firefighters as carcinogens and in 2025 the number of firefighters in Connecticut was estimated at 13,401. He adds that cancer is the number one case of death for firefighters but there is little research on it in Connecticut. Mr. Bond says that a specific Cancer Screening Guideline is a solution. He adds that the bill will provide funding for this.

Henry D. Tirrell, First Selectman, Town of Norfolk: First Selectman Tirrell states that his town is heavily reliant on the support of their volunteer firefighters. He mentions a gas spill in 2025 that happened close to one of their elementary schools which the firefighters responded to. He adds that firefighters have an unpredictable job and testing for cancers should be a given. For these reasons, he is in support of the bill.

John Field, Fire Chief, Winsted Fire Department: Chief Field states that he has been serving as a firefighter for over 40 years. He adds that in the position he is in, he is not only responsible for the fire department, but also the community. He states that the environment firefighters work in has changed over the past decades with modern houses, cars, and technology which have different types of toxic compounds. In 2023, he says that he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, a cancer that has been widely associated with firefighting exposures. This was not only life changing for him but also those around him. He states that in many towns' firefighters serve their communities, but they do not get financial compensation. He claims that cancer screenings for firefighters is an important step toward early detection and prevention. For these reasons, he is in support of the bill.

Shelley Forker, Firefighter, NREMT: Ms. Forker states that firefighters are exposed to many different types of toxic substances that cause illnesses and cancers. She states that according to NIOSH, firefighters are more likely to die of cancer than the public. She claims that while many of them are covered by medical monitoring, many of these programs fail in preventing cancer. She claims that this bill is important to the health of our firefighters. For these reasons, she is in support of the bill.

Santo Strano III: Mr. Strano is in support of the bill. He states that he is a former volunteer with Phoenix Hose Engine 8 in Danbury. He adds that firefighters have an increased rate of cancer because they are exposed to toxic chemicals.

Daniel Wuori, Volunteer Firefighter and EMT, Norfolk Vol FD: Mr. Wuori states that he has been serving as a firefighter and EMT in the town of Norfolk for a long time. He is also a two-time cancer survivor. He states that this bill will benefit all firefighters and their families. He adds that he has worked alongside other cancer survivors, which only happened because they were screened for cancer early. For these reasons, Mr. Wuori is in support of the bill.

Anonymous 30: Supports the bill because it's targeted towards first responders.

Anonymous 44: Supports the bill for reasons unstated.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Mike Muszynski, CCM: Mr. Muszynski states that this bill would expand the line of duty definition to include firefighters who died of cancer, provide death benefits for cancer deaths of firefighters, reimburse towns who provide health coverage through a state "partnership plan", and create a cancer screening program for firefighters. He says that since 2016 the CCM has led efforts to support firefighters diagnosed with cancer, which has included plans and streamlining the benefit processes that bypass Workers' Compensation. He claims that the intent of the bill is very good, however, funds will not start to be collected until July of 2026, which raises concerns regarding its ability to sustain additional payouts. He adds that the CCM asks for the inclusion of language regarding state-funded benefits that are not used as a legal precedent to reclassify cancer as an occupational injury. He asks the committee to consider delaying the passage of the bill until July of 2027 to ensure long-term financial viability of the account.

Anonymous 35: Expresses general opposition to the bill.

Reported by: Emma Rybacki, Clerk
Olivia Buczak, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/27/26