

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel

www.msfa.org



Johnie F. Roth, Jr.

Legislative Chairman

17 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Office 410-974-2222

Cell 202-215-2954

Johnie.roth@bccrs.org

Madam Chair Kaiser

Vice Chair Washington

SUPPORT OF HB 562 – INCOME TAX - SUBTRACTION MODIFICATION VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL (FIRST RESPONDERS TAX BENEFIT ACT)

Good afternoon Madam Chair Kaiser, Vice Chairman Washington and members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

My name is Johnie Roth, Jr. and I chair the Legislative Committee of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA), and I am writing in SUPPORT of House Bill 562 sponsored by Delegates Cox and many others.

The MSFA is a statewide organization representing over 25,000 volunteer fire, rescue, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics and 363 member companies.

Words can't express my pride in being a volunteer in the Maryland Fire and Rescue Services in Montgomery County, Maryland for the last 53 years. The volunteers of Maryland provide thousands of hours each and every year and save the taxpayers millions of dollars annually. The volunteer first responders take the exact same training as their counterparts on the career side and usually stand-by at least one night or day for at least 12 hours. These dedicated men and women don't ask what's in it for them and return week after week for duty, training, cleaning, fundraising, and running calls.

Currently there is Length of Service Programs (LOSAP) managed in many of the state counties, which recognize a volunteer firefighter, emergency medical technician, paramedic, administrative, and auxiliary members after service after a certain number of years service (usually 25 years of service) and is obtained by a point system of activities within several areas of participation. Fifty points are what is required to have qualified for a year's credit for participation in the LOSAP programs. These are local county programs.

The bill before you today will be a valuable recruitment and retention tool in that it would encourage more potential volunteer candidates to become Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, or Paramedics in their communities. By lowering the current point requirement from fifty (50) to thirty (30) would in our eyes a win win for both the volunteer service and the residents of these Maryland communities. Everything else in the current law would remain the same in our eyes.

We have recently made suggestions. as friendly amendments, to this bill regarding a banking of points once the member has met the 30-point threshold that could be used in the future under special circumstances. This is yet another possible retention tool and we are willing to work with the sponsor to enhance any additions to this bill.

Madam Chair, the MSFA respectfully requests your Support of HB 562 and respectfully request a FAVORABLE REPORT from your committee.

Thank you very much for your consideration and I'd be glad to answer any questions in the future.

**Johnie F. Roth, Jr.
MSFA Chairman
Legislative Committee**