

Testimony in support of SB1117.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB1117_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

3/19/2024

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/1117 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB#/1117, Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information

This bill is an attempt to ensure that our first responders, who put their lives on the line to take care of their community, are properly compensated for the essential work they are doing. It creates transparency on the computation of overtime pay as well as detailed information for that firefighter's access to more complete information about their pay and benefits.

It would also give the firefighter or their exclusive representative the authorization for initiation of a grievance complaint when the county or municipality fails to provide the required payroll information.

This bill will strengthen the ability of the firefighter's to be fully informed about their compensation and will facilitate actions if that full information is not made available to them.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an favorable report on SB#/1117

SB1117-FIN_MACo_OPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 1117

Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 19, 2024

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 1117. This bill would remove a topic that is currently subject to local bargaining, and instead establish a statewide mandate for a uniform schedule and overtime policy for all professional firefighters statewide. **SB 1117's one-size-fits-all policy would detrimentally impact local firefighting capacity and emergency services for Marylanders and would also pose an unreasonable and untenable funding mandate for county governments.**

Hours, schedule, and overtime are a longstanding subject of collective bargaining, for good reason: to address each local union's individual and unique needs and capacity. By mandating uniform policies across the state, SB 1117 would negate existing collective bargaining agreements to the detriment of firefighters, county governments, and Maryland residents. The bill would shift all firefighting units to a 42-hour work week, with anything over that being considered overtime. Concerningly, SB 1117 would count all paid leave expended toward the mandated 42-hour work week standard.

Doing so would result in less coverage at any given time to respond to emergencies and/or the need to hire a significant number of firefighters to fill labor shortages resulting from restricting the work week to 42 hours. In Baltimore City alone, this would mean hiring nearly 160 more firefighters. In Frederick County, this would mean hiring nearly 60 more, at a time when the country is facing a crisis in hiring and retention of paid and volunteer firefighters.

Alternatively, counties would be forced to pay exorbitant overtime wages to maintain existing levels of emergency services. This would be a significant financial challenge for counties, maybe even untenable. Furthermore, similar overtime policies in public safety have not proven prudent or financially sound.

Counties are strong supporters of firefighters. In fact, one of MACo's four 2024 legislative initiatives seeks to tackle the hiring and retention of firefighters with a package of innovative incentive policies, employee benefits, and professional development. Notably, that bill (HB 899/SB 691) is based on the recommendations of an interim commission to study hiring and retention issues in firefighting, of which standardized overtime and schedule policies were not recommendations.

For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 1117 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

SB 1117 - MoCo_Stoddard_OPP (GA24)-signed.pdf

Uploaded by: Earl Stoddard

Position: UNF




OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Richard S. Madaleno
Chief Administrative Officer

March 19, 2024

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Earl P. Stoddard III, PhD, MPH, CEM
Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Office of the County Executive 

RE: Senate Bill 1117, *Employment Standards – Firefighters – Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information*
Oppose

Senate Bill 1117 would require governmental units that employ firefighters to compute overtime pay for a firefighter based on each hour over 168 hours that the firefighter works during a 28-day work period. The overtime calculation would be based on all regularly scheduled hours, inclusive of earned or accrued leave. Currently, for its fire operations, Montgomery County utilizes a 24/48 schedule, which results in a standard work week of 48 hours. The bill also outlines certain requirements and procedures related to the provision of payroll information.

This bill should be opposed.

If enacted, it would conflict with the County's existing collective bargaining agreement with the International Association of Fire Fighters union. "Hours of work" is a mandatory subject of bargaining under the Montgomery County Code, and the proposed change in the law would require the County to renegotiate the "hours of work" provisions. Any changes as a result of bargained revisions to "hours of work" would negatively impact County taxpayers who would be burdened with higher costs for firefighter compensation for the same level of service.

Also, changes to "hours of work" would result in a departure from the existing 24/48 schedule, which may also require an adjustment of an increase to the number of firefighters necessary to fully staff the County's 37 fire and rescue stations. Any increase in the number of firefighters

The Honorable Pamela Beidle

Re: Senate Bill 1117

March 19, 2024

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requires a significant recruitment undertaking, and it could take anywhere from six to 24 months to fully staff to a new staffing level. As the County works towards full staffing, overtime would increase significantly to cover the gaps. Not only would this be costly from a financial standpoint, but concerning from a firefighter safety perspective since it would result in more firefighters working on less rest, thereby increasing the risk of injury to firefighters and the public they serve.

Finally, it could be difficult to find firefighters willing to cover shifts, and the disruptions could result in critical training or retraining opportunities being delayed or missed, potentially placing firefighters and the public at risk.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee not advance this legislation.

cc: Members of the Finance Committee

MML-SB 1117 - OPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Fiore

Position: UNF



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

March 19, 2024

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill: SB 1117 – Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information

Position: Unfavorable

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League opposes Senate Bill 1117, which would require overtime pay for paid firefighters in excess of 168 hours over a 28-day period, more payroll information, and codify a process for grievances.

While there are relatively few municipalities that employ firefighters – vs. utilizing a volunteer force – these benefits are traditionally collectively bargained alongside other benefits. Passage of SB 1117 would likely reopen those negotiations. Further, there could be additional costs related to the payment of overtime or hiring more employees. Together, and potentially in concert with other legislation being considered this year, this bill may make it more difficult for the remaining paid programs to continue.

For these reasons the League respectfully requests that this committee provide Senate Bill 1117 with an unfavorable report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Theresa Kuhns
Angelica Bailey Thupari, Esq.
Bill Jorch
Justin Fiore

Chief Executive Officer
Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs
Director, Public Policy & Research
Deputy Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

SB 1117, UNF, FCG, CAO, LS24.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Price

Position: UNF



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

John K. Peterson, Chief Administrative Officer

SB 1117 – Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information

DATE: March 19, 2024
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Unfavorable
FROM: John Peterson, Chief Administrative Officer of Frederick County Government

As the Chief Administrative Officer, I write with my concern regarding SB 1117 Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information.

Frederick County Government has a strong relationship with our Professional Fire Fighter Association, IAFF Local 3666. Last spring, we successfully negotiated a strong contract that outlines working conditions and benefits, including overtime and work schedules. Based on consultation and agreement between Frederick County Government and IAFF Local 3666, Frederick County Fire and Rescue continues to follow a 48-hour work week.

Because SB1117 would require local jurisdictions to pay overtime wages after 168 hours are worked in a 28-day period, we would be required to shift to a 42-hour work week. To meet this requirement, Frederick County Government would need to hire 94 additional employees at various ranks. We estimate that this would cost \$12,921,231 in the next Fiscal Year and each year thereafter. Even if we met the requirements of SB 1117 by utilizing our current workforce by paying 6 hours of overtime each week, this would place a significant financial and logistical burden on our Fire and Rescue Services.

It is important to honor the agreements established between local governments and the collective bargaining units that we employ. Decisions regarding work schedules, compensation, and overtime belong at the local bargaining table, not in state policy. The strong two-year agreement between Frederick County Government and IAFF Local 3666 illustrates that this process works and state policy should not supersede that.

Thank you for your consideration of the impact of SB 1117 on local governments. I urge you to give this bill an unfavorable report.

John K. Peterson
Chief Administrative Officer

Re:
(Add Date)

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