

Dear Esteemed Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Maryland Senate bill 0124, *Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages and Payroll Information*. This legislation represents a critical step toward ensuring fair treatment and equitable compensation for the brave individuals who dedicate their lives to protecting our communities.

Firefighters endure immense physical and emotional challenges in the line of duty, often risking their lives to save others. Despite their indispensable role, many firefighters face inconsistent payment practices and lack access to transparent payroll information, which can lead to unnecessary financial stress and uncertainty. This bill addresses these issues by establishing clear standards for timely wage payment and ensuring access to accurate payroll records.

In Washington County, this bill would ensure the fair treatment of firefighters. Currently, career firefighters in Washington County are forced to endure a 53 hr/week average prior to earning any overtime – a morale breaking 32% more than every other worker. These conditions have a substantial effect on the morale and effectiveness of firefighters – a significant reason behind a nearly 30% attrition rate.

The provisions in this bill will:

- **Guarantee timely and consistent payment** to firefighters, reflecting their invaluable service to the community.
- **Require transparency in payroll information**, empowering firefighters to verify their earnings and address discrepancies promptly.
- **Promote fairness and accountability** in employment practices, fostering a stronger relationship between firefighters and their employers.

By supporting this legislation, Maryland has an opportunity to lead the way in setting a standard for how we treat those who serve and protect our communities. Ensuring that firefighters are compensated fairly and transparently is not just a matter of financial equity—it is a matter of respect and appreciation for their sacrifice and dedication.

I urge you to vote in favor of this bill and demonstrate Maryland's commitment to supporting its firefighters. Their courage and selflessness deserve nothing less than our full support and gratitude.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Billy Woods

Vice President, IAFF Local 1605

The Hagerstown Professional Firefighters

PO Box 55

Funkstown, MD 21734