

# **Senate Bill 0124 Written Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Billy Woods

Position: FAV

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

# **SB 124 - Employment Standards - Firefighters - Pay**

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND STATE & DC  
AFL-CIO**

Donna S. Edwards  
*President*

Gerald W. Jackson  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

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**SB 124 - Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages and Payroll Information  
Senate Finance Committee  
January 15, 2025**

**SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards  
President  
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 124. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 124 seeks to establish clear parameters for fair and transparent compensation for firefighters.

Firefighters routinely place their lives on the line to protect our communities. It is a physically and mentally demanding job that requires unwavering dedication, bravery, sacrifice, and a commitment to public safety. The nature of their work oftentimes requires long and irregular hours, with many firefighters having to work overtime to meet the demands of their community. Despite this, there remains inequitable compensation practices, perpetuating wage disparities and unfair and deceptive treatment.

SB 124 aims to directly address these concerns by ensuring greater fairness, transparency, and accountability within firefighter pay. This legislation does a number of things; it requires governmental units to compute overtime wages equitably; enables governmental units to provide clear payroll information to every firefighter; and, allows for firefighters or their representatives to file grievances if these standards are not upheld. This bill helps to eliminate certain disparities and administrative challenges to protect against wage miscalculations and relieve the burdens of navigating compensation issues that often fall on the firefighters themselves.

Fair and transparent compensation is a small step in recognizing the profound work that these individuals do day in and day out. Given the inherent stress and immense responsibility of this line of work, firefighters should not have to worry about being paid fairly for shouldering such impactful service.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to submit a favorable report of SB 124. Thank you for your consideration.

# **SB0124.1.14.25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Grant Walker

Position: FAV



**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS & PARAMEDICS ASSOCIATION**  
**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF FIRE FIGHTERS, LOCAL 1619**

3060 Mitchellville Road · Suite 217 · Bowie, Maryland 20716  
(301) 805-5300 · [www.IAFF1619.org](http://www.IAFF1619.org)



January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Prince George's County Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics Association  
IAFF Local 1619  
3060 Mitchellville Rd.  
Suite 217  
Bowie, MD 20716

RE: Favorable Support for SB 0124

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to ask for your support of Senate Bill 0124 a crucial piece of legislation that will directly impact the well-being and safety of our firefighters: a bill that would mandate overtime pay for any firefighter who works more than 42 hours on average in a 28 day cycle. As the President of IAFF Local 1619, representing nearly 1,800 active and retired Maryland Fire Fighters, I believe this bill is necessary to protect the physical and mental health of our firefighting professionals and ensure that they have the support they need to continue to serve our community.

In Prince George's County, we have contractual protections that already provide this crucial benefit for our Fire Fighters, it is well past time that all Maryland Fire Fighters have this same protection. Similar to how most Maryland workers make overtime after 40 hours, Fire Fighters are just asking for the same type of workplace protections. In some of our largest jurisdictions in the state (Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Howard County, Frederick County) we are failing to provide a fairness and equity.

By mandating overtime pay after 42 hours of work, we can:

1. **Promote firefighter well-being:** Extended work hours without proper rest contribute to fatigue, which can impair judgment, reaction time, and overall performance. Ensuring adequate compensation for overtime will provide an incentive for departments to hire additional staff and prevent overworking their personnel.
2. **Improve public safety:** Well-rested firefighters are more effective in responding to emergencies, making critical decisions, and maintaining peak performance under stress. This will ultimately lead to better outcomes for our communities during emergencies.
3. **Uphold fairness across Maryland:** Firefighters put their lives on the line every day, and it is only right that their time, energy, and sacrifices are recognized and compensated fairly.

I urge you to consider the long-term benefits of this bill, not only for the health and safety of firefighters but for the safety of all residents in our communities. Your support would send a clear message that our state values those who dedicate their lives to public service, and that we are committed to providing them with the resources and workplace protections they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I would be happy to discuss this further if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,  
Grant Walker

President IAFF Local 1619  
240-285-6286

# **SB0124.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joseph Pilat

Position: FAV



**Annapolis Professional Firefighters**  
**IAFF Local 1926**  
**P.O. Box 2276**  
**Annapolis, MD 21404**

**Date: 1/14/2025**

**Dear members of the Finance Committee**

**I am writing to ask for your support of the proposed firefighter overtime bill that mandates overtime pay after 42 hours of work. As you know, firefighters often face demanding schedules and unpredictable emergencies, requiring them to work extended hours to protect our communities. This bill would ensure that firefighters are fairly compensated, no matter the jurisdiction they serve, for their dedication and the additional hours they put in. Many of these hardworking individuals already go above and beyond to keep us safe. By enacting this legislation, we can ensure the same type of workplace overtime protections that exist for most Marylanders exists for our firefighters.**

**I respectfully urge you to lend your support to this important bill and stand with the brave men and women who serve our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

**Joe Pilat**  
**President**  
**Annapolis Professional Firefighters**  
**IAFF Local 1926**



**Cell: (410) 991-0488**

**Email: [presidentlocal1926@gmail.com](mailto:presidentlocal1926@gmail.com)**

# **Ltr to Chair Beidle Sen Finance 01.14.25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joshua Fannon

Position: FAV



# Baltimore Fire Officers Association

Local No. 964

1030 S. LINWOOD AVENUE  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21224  
(410) 276-6964 FAX: (410) 675-3930



CHARTERED FEBRUARY 20, 1948



January 14, 2025

Maryland Senate Finance Committee  
Room 121, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
ATTN: Chair Pamela Beidle and Vice Chair Antonio Hayes  
**SENT VIA EMAIL**

RE: Recommending a Favorable Report on SB124

Chair Beidle and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 124: Employment Standards – Firefighters – Payment of Wages & Payroll Information. On behalf of the members of the Baltimore Fire Officers, we strongly encourage a favorable report. In order to give you further context on the issue, I have included text from a resolution passed at the 2023 Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland Convention last fall.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA), § 207(k) as amended in 1974, provides for firefighters to receive overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of fifty-three (53) hours per week; or two hundred twelve (212) hours in twenty-eight (28) days. *Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority*, 469 U.S. 833 (1976) applied the provisions of FLSA to state and local governments. The State of Maryland, by and through the Maryland legislature, is empowered to enact legislation that provides rights more favorable to its citizens than those provided by the federal government.

Substantial data and experience have demonstrated that firefighter's health, well-being, and work life balance are negatively impacted by working longer hours than those of the general work population at large. The majority of the IAFF locals in this State have secured forty-two (42) hour work weeks through collective bargaining, demonstrating that such a schedule can be responsibly staffed, while providing opportunities for firefighters to achieve better health, avoidance of fatigue, and strike a better work life balance.

Currently, five (5) IAFF locals organized under respective jurisdictions of the laws of the State of Maryland have been unable to achieve a comparable work schedule through collective bargaining. Further, local governments are beginning to exploit the high work week hours permitted for firefighters under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Our firefighters are concerned that, left unchecked, this will lead to a statewide increase of work hours for all firefighters solely because the federal and state laws do not offer further protection.

Firefighters risk their lives daily to protect our communities, and it is imperative that their financial wellbeing is safeguarded. SB 124 would:

- Require governmental units to compute overtime pay based on a 28-day, 168-hour work period, acknowledging the demanding and irregular schedules that firefighters face.
- Mandate that counties and municipalities provide detailed payroll information, including rates of pay, overtime rates, and gross earnings, ensuring transparency and accuracy in compensation.
- Establish a clear grievance procedure for firefighters or their representatives in cases of payroll discrepancies, providing a path to resolution and accountability.

This bill not only enhances payroll transparency but also promotes fairness by ensuring that all regularly scheduled hours, including those covered by earned or accrued leave, are included in overtime calculations. Furthermore, by outlining remedies for payroll errors, SB 124 demonstrates a commitment to protecting those who serve us so selflessly.

Passage of this legislation would be a meaningful step in recognizing the sacrifices made by our firefighters and reinforcing our commitment to their financial stability and overall wellbeing. I urge you to support SB 124 and work toward its swift enactment.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter. We greatly praise Sen. Kramer's leadership on this pressing issue facing professional firefighters throughout the state. We humbly ask that you return a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,



Joshua L. Fannon, President  
IAFF Local 964 Baltimore Fire Officers

CC: Mr. Jeffrey Buddle, President, Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

# **Testimony in support of SB0124 Employment Standard**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

01/16/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0124 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages and Payroll Information**

**TO:** Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes 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#/0124, Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages 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. As the father-in-law of a Montgomery County Fire Department Captain I want to be sure she is treated fairly and respectfully for the vital services she provides to the community.

This bill will strengthen the ability of the firefighters 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 a favorable report on SB#/0124**

# **Frederick County Local 3666 Support Testimony SB12**

Uploaded by: Stephen Jones

Position: FAV



Career Fire Fighters Association of Frederick County, MD Inc.  
International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3666  
Affiliated with:  
Maryland State Professional Fire Fighters Association and The Central Maryland Labor Council / AFL-CIO



## **SUPPORT**

### **SB124: Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages and Payroll Information**

**Sponsored by: Senator Kramer**

**Finance Committee**

**Hearing 1/16 at 3:00 p.m**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write as the President of the Career Firefighters Association of Frederick County, Maryland - Frederick County's public employee organization that represents the over 600 men and women employed with the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue.

I am writing to express my support for SB124 Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages and Payroll Information. SB124 would ensure fair compensation, transparency, and workplace protections for firefighters, who perform one of the most demanding and critical public safety roles.

We must recognize and support the sacrifices made by our public safety personnel and improving transparency regarding their pay is a matter of fairness. This legislation is a proactive measure to improve access to clear and accurate payroll information but will also allow firefighters to verify their pay. Standardizing payroll is an important and necessary step forward for Maryland to recognize the increasingly important role of paid personnel in our local jurisdictions. As we grow, we must modernize our practices. SB124 was designed to offer a way forward that benefits the residents we serve, the firefighters we seek to retain, and the Counties and municipalities that employ us.

Specifically, passing this legislation is an important step toward accountability and a move to extend workplace protections that are currently afforded to other Maryland workers.

I strongly urge you to support this legislation, which will have a positive impact on the lives of our public safety personnel and their families. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your support on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Stephen Jones, President, IAFF Local 3666

Contact: Katie Nash  
[katie@fiastroconsulting.com](mailto:katie@fiastroconsulting.com)  
301.524.9142



# **SB-124 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Zachary Morrell

Position: FAV

## Written Testimony in Support of Maryland Senate Bill 124

Submitted by: Zachary Morrell, Firefighter/FAO, Washington County, MD, Member of IAFF Local 1605

To: Maryland Senate Finance Committee

Hearing Date: January 16, 2025

Chairperson and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Zachary Morrell, and I am a Firefighter/Fire Apparatus Operator serving Washington County, Maryland. I am also a proud member of IAFF Local 1605, representing the professional firefighters who protect and serve our community. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 124, which seeks to address long-standing inequities in how firefighters are compensated for overtime and improve transparency in payroll practices.

Like many firefighters in Maryland, I work a 48-hour workweek. Despite this, the current policy in Washington County requires me and my colleagues to work over 106 hours in a 14-day period before qualifying for overtime pay. This means we must average a 53-hour workweek to earn overtime. In stark contrast, the majority of other employees in Washington County receive overtime pay for any hours worked beyond 40 in a single week. This discrepancy devalues the commitment and sacrifices of firefighters, who often put themselves in harm's way to protect the lives and property of Maryland residents.

Firefighters are called to act without hesitation in the face of danger—whether it's rushing into a burning building, responding to hazardous material incidents, or providing life-saving medical care. We do this willingly and with pride. However, it is deeply disheartening that our financial security and the well-being of our families are often treated as an afterthought by local, state, and federal governments because it is the cheaper option.

The challenges created by unfair compensation policies are not just theoretical—they have real-world consequences. We are currently witnessing a tragic fire in Los Angeles, where staffing shortages are a major concern. Understaffing and undervaluing firefighters

ultimately jeopardize public safety. Senate Bill 124 provides Maryland with an opportunity to prevent similar crises by ensuring firefighters are compensated fairly, making it more likely that highly trained and experienced professionals will remain in Maryland to serve our communities.

This bill is about more than overtime pay—it is about equity, fairness, and respect. By passing SB 124, you will send a clear message to Maryland's firefighters that their dedication is recognized, their sacrifices are appreciated, and their financial security matters. It will also help strengthen Maryland's ability to recruit and retain the skilled firefighters needed to protect our citizens.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 124 and stand with the firefighters who stand ready to protect Marylanders every day. Thank you for your time, attention, and commitment to ensuring that Maryland remains a safer and stronger state.

Respectfully submitted,

Zachary Morrell

Firefighter/FAO, Washington County, MD

Member, IAFF Local 1605

# **Anne Arundel County \_OPP\_SB124.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: UNF



January 16, 2025

**Senate Bill 124**

**Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll  
Information**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: UNFAVORABLE**

The Anne Arundel County Office of Personnel **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 124 – Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Overtime and Payroll Information. This bill requires a government that employs a firefighter to pay overtime wages for each hour over 168 hours that a firefighter works during a 28-day work period, requires certain information be provided for each pay period, and specifies the grievance process if a county or municipality fails to provide this information.

Currently, the hours worked and wages paid to Anne Arundel County firefighters are negotiated through the collective bargaining process and are set forth in Memoranda of Agreement. This bill provides a required work schedule and separate grievance process for any claim of noncompliance with the statute – and entitles a firefighter to "damages" of up to 3 times the amount of the wages allegedly due. The Bill conflicts with the terms of the County's negotiated Memoranda of Agreement with the bargaining units representing sworn Fire personnel. Furthermore, the Maryland Wage Payment and Collection Law and Maryland Wage and Hour Law already establish the obligation of an employer to provide information on wages and hours and to pay wages due.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully request an **UNFAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 124.

# **SB0124-FIN\_MACo\_OPP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Karrington Anderson

Position: UNF



## **Senate Bill 124**

### *Employment Standards – Firefighters – Payment of Wages and Payroll Information*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Finance Committee

Date: January 16, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 124. This bill would eliminate local bargaining authority over firefighter schedules and overtime policies and instead establish a statewide mandate for uniform schedules and overtime policies. SB 124 is a one-size-fits-all approach that threatens to undermine local firefighting operations, place an undue financial burden on county governments, and compromise emergency response services for Maryland residents.

Firefighter schedules, hours, and overtime are currently – and properly – among the topics collectively bargained between the local government and the employee representatives. In some jurisdictions, where the employees have prioritized a work schedule that leads to 42 or 40 hours per week, the bargaining process has allowed the county government to secure other trade-offs to make the needed service levels affordable. SB 124 fails to do this by substituting the State's judgment on this single element, overriding any locally negotiated provisions, and arbitrarily imposing an overtime standard with no regard to any offsets that could have been bargained.

By mandating uniform policies across the state, SB 124 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. Additionally, and concerning, SB 124 would count any expended paid leave 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 Frederick County alone, this would mean hiring nearly 100 more employees when hiring and retaining career and volunteer firefighters is already extremely challenging in Maryland and nationwide.

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, and it may even be untenable. Furthermore, similar overtime policies in public safety have not proven prudent or financially sound.

SB 124 would create unintended consequences that could weaken emergency services and impose untenable costs on county governments. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 124 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

# **SB 124 - MoCo\_Elrich\_OPP (GA 24).pdf**

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: UNF





OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

January 16, 2025

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich  
County Executive

RE: Senate Bill 124, *Employment Standards – Firefighters – Payment of Wages and Payroll Information*

Oppose

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Senate Bill 124 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.

I oppose the enactment of this bill, for two key reasons:

- its passage would constitute an unfunded State mandate, estimated at \$10 million annually, that would be borne by Montgomery County taxpayers – for the same level of service they receive now; and
- “hours of work” is a mandatory subject of collective bargaining under the Montgomery County Code, which this legislation intentionally circumvents.

In addition, 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 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

The Honorable Pamela Beidle

Re: Senate Bill 124

January 16, 2025

Page 2

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