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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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**SB 90**  
**Workers' Compensation**  
**Occupational Disease Presumptions – Hypertension**

Good afternoon Vice Chair Hayes and Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 90, Workers' Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – Hypertension. SB 90 addresses a real problem affecting firefighters, fire fighting instructors, rescue squad members, advanced life support unit members, and members of the Office of the State Fire Marshal suffering from hypertension.

Our firefighters do not miss work, or in some circumstances, not enough work due to hypertension thus causing their workers' compensation claims related to hypertension to be denied. This bill helps close the loophole created by advances in hypertension medication and screening and will help ensure that firefighters and other first responders will be able to access the care they need through workers' comp.

SB 90 establishes that certain firefighters and other first responders are presumed to have an occupational disease suffered in the line of duty, *and are presumed to be disabled*, if the individual:

- has been diagnosed with hypertension,
- has been prescribed medication to treat that hypertension for at least 90 days,
- has served in their role for at least 2 years, and
- are still serving at the time their claim is filed.

The presumption of disability is a critical component of the bill because what we are seeing is that Commissioners in workers' compensation hearings are determining that because some first responders are not missing work, or not missing enough work, they are not partially or totally disabled, which is a requirement for the hypertension presumption under current law.

Our firefighters serve us daily in the most dangerous of situations, I respectfully request a "Favorable Report" on Senate Bill 90.