

SENATE BILL 1069

K1
SB 406/23 – FIN

4lr1275
CF HB 190

By: **Senator Kagan**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2024

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Workers' Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – First**
3 **Responders**

4 FOR the purpose of providing that a first responder who is diagnosed by a licensed
5 psychologist or psychiatrist with post-traumatic stress disorder is presumed under
6 certain circumstances to have an occupational disease that was suffered in the line
7 of duty and is compensable under workers' compensation law; specifying that the
8 presumption does not limit any other right or claim an individual may have under
9 workers' compensation law; and generally relating to occupational disease
10 presumptions under the workers' compensation law.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
12 Article – Education
13 Section 13–516(a)(1) and (7)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
17 Article – Labor and Employment
18 Section 9–503
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Education**

24 13–516.

25 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (7) “Emergency medical services provider” means an individual licensed or
2 certified by the EMS Board as:

- 3 (i) A cardiac rescue technician;
- 4 (ii) An emergency medical dispatcher;
- 5 (iii) An emergency medical responder;
- 6 (iv) An emergency medical technician; or
- 7 (v) A paramedic.

8 **Article – Labor and Employment**

9 9–503.

10 (a) A paid firefighter, paid fire fighting instructor, paid rescue squad member,
11 paid advanced life support unit member, or sworn member of the Office of the State Fire
12 Marshal employed by an airport authority, a county, a fire control district, a municipality,
13 or the State or a volunteer firefighter, volunteer fire fighting instructor, volunteer rescue
14 squad member, or volunteer advanced life support unit member who is a covered employee
15 under § 9–234 of this title is presumed to have an occupational disease that was suffered
16 in the line of duty and is compensable under this title if:

- 17 (1) the individual has heart disease, hypertension, or lung disease;
- 18 (2) the heart disease, hypertension, or lung disease results in partial or
19 total disability or death; and
- 20 (3) in the case of a volunteer firefighter, volunteer fire fighting instructor,
21 volunteer rescue squad member, or volunteer advanced life support unit member, the
22 individual has met a suitable standard of physical examination before becoming a
23 firefighter, fire fighting instructor, rescue squad member, or advanced life support unit
24 member.

25 (b) (1) A paid police officer employed by an airport authority, a county, the
26 Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a municipality, or the State,
27 a deputy sheriff of Montgomery County, or, subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, a
28 deputy sheriff of Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel County detention officer, deputy
29 sheriff of Baltimore City, Montgomery County correctional officer, Prince George’s County
30 deputy sheriff, Prince George’s County correctional officer, or deputy sheriff of Allegany
31 County is presumed to be suffering from an occupational disease that was suffered in the
32 line of duty and is compensable under this title if:

1 (i) the police officer, deputy sheriff, or correctional officer is
2 suffering from heart disease or hypertension; and

3 (ii) the heart disease or hypertension results in partial or total
4 disability or death.

5 (2) (i) A deputy sheriff of Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel County
6 detention officer, deputy sheriff of Baltimore City, Montgomery County correctional officer,
7 Prince George's County deputy sheriff, or Prince George's County correctional officer is
8 entitled to the presumption under this subsection only to the extent that the individual
9 suffers from heart disease or hypertension that is more severe than the individual's heart
10 disease or hypertension condition existing prior to the individual's employment as a deputy
11 sheriff of Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel County detention officer, deputy sheriff of
12 Baltimore City, Montgomery County correctional officer, Prince George's County deputy
13 sheriff, or Prince George's County correctional officer.

14 (ii) To be eligible for the presumption under this subsection, a deputy
15 sheriff of Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel County detention officer, deputy sheriff of
16 Baltimore City, Montgomery County correctional officer, Prince George's County deputy
17 sheriff, or Prince George's County correctional officer, as a condition of employment, shall
18 submit to a medical examination to determine any heart disease or hypertension condition
19 existing prior to the individual's employment as a deputy sheriff of Anne Arundel County,
20 Anne Arundel County detention officer, deputy sheriff of Baltimore City, Montgomery
21 County correctional officer, Prince George's County deputy sheriff, or Prince George's
22 County correctional officer.

23 (c) A paid firefighter, paid fire fighting instructor, paid rescue squad member,
24 paid advanced life support unit member, or a sworn member of the Office of the State Fire
25 Marshal employed by an airport authority, a county, a fire control district, a municipality,
26 or the State or a volunteer firefighter, volunteer fire fighting instructor, volunteer rescue
27 squad member, or volunteer advanced life support unit member who is a covered employee
28 under § 9-234 of this title is presumed to be suffering from an occupational disease that
29 was suffered in the line of duty and is compensable under this title if:

30 (1) the individual has leukemia or prostate, rectal, throat, multiple
31 myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, brain, testicular, bladder, kidney or renal cell, or
32 breast cancer that is caused by contact with a toxic substance that the individual has
33 encountered in the line of duty;

34 (2) the individual has completed at least 10 years of cumulative service
35 within the State as a firefighter, a fire fighting instructor, a rescue squad member, or an
36 advanced life support unit member or in a combination of those jobs;

37 (3) the cancer or leukemia results in partial or total disability or death; and

38 (4) in the case of a volunteer firefighter, volunteer fire fighting instructor,
39 volunteer rescue squad member, or volunteer advanced life support unit member, the

1 individual has met a suitable standard of physical examination before becoming a
 2 firefighter, fire fighting instructor, rescue squad member, or advanced life support unit
 3 member.

4 (d) (1) A forest ranger, park ranger, wildlife ranger, paid law enforcement
 5 employee of the Department of Natural Resources who is a covered employee under §
 6 9–207 of this title, and a park police officer of the Maryland–National Capital Park and
 7 Planning Commission is presumed to have an occupational disease that was suffered in the
 8 line of duty and is compensable under this title if the individual:

9 (i) is suffering from Lyme disease; and

10 (ii) was not suffering from Lyme disease before assignment to a
 11 position that regularly places the employee in an outdoor wooded environment.

12 (2) The presumption under this subsection for a park police officer of the
 13 Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission shall only apply:

14 (i) during the time that the park police officer is assigned to a
 15 position that regularly places the park police officer in an outdoor wooded environment;
 16 and

17 (ii) for 3 years after the last date that the park police officer was
 18 assigned by the Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission to a position
 19 that regularly placed the officer in an outdoor wooded environment.

20 (E) (1) IN THIS SECTION, “FIRST RESPONDER” MEANS:

21 (I) A FIREFIGHTER;

22 (II) AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDER, AS
 23 DEFINED IN § 13–516 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE;

24 (III) A RESCUE SQUAD MEMBER;

25 (IV) A SWORN MEMBER OF THE OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE
 26 MARSHAL;

27 (V) A MEMBER OF A VOLUNTEER FIRE OR RESCUE COMPANY
 28 WHO IS A COVERED EMPLOYEE UNDER § 9–234 OF THIS TITLE;

29 (VI) A 9–1–1 SPECIALIST;

30 (VII) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER; OR

1 (VIII) A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER.

2 (2) FOR PURPOSES OF THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF
3 POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, A FIRST RESPONDER IS PRESUMED TO BE
4 SUFFERING FROM AN OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE THAT WAS SUFFERED IN THE LINE OF
5 DUTY AND IS COMPENSABLE UNDER THIS TITLE IF:

6 (I) THE INDIVIDUAL IS DIAGNOSED WITH POST-TRAUMATIC
7 STRESS DISORDER BY A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST OR PSYCHIATRIST;

8 (II) AT THE TIME OF DIAGNOSIS, THE INDIVIDUAL HAS
9 COMPLETED AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF CUMULATIVE SERVICE WITHIN THE STATE AS A
10 FIRST RESPONDER; AND

11 (III) THE CLAIM IS FILED WHILE THE INDIVIDUAL IS EMPLOYED
12 AS A FIRST RESPONDER OR WITHIN 18 MONTHS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
13 SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT AS A FIRST RESPONDER.

14 (3) THE PRESUMPTION UNDER THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT LIMIT
15 ANY OTHER RIGHT AN INDIVIDUAL MAY HAVE, OR CLAIM AN INDIVIDUAL MAY BRING,
16 UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

17 [(e)] (F) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, any **FIRST**
18 **RESPONDER**, paid firefighter, paid fire fighting instructor, sworn member of the Office of
19 the State Fire Marshal, paid police officer, forest ranger, park ranger, wildlife ranger, paid
20 law enforcement employee of the Department of Natural Resources, deputy sheriff of Anne
21 Arundel County, Anne Arundel County detention officer, park police officer of the
22 Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, deputy sheriff of Montgomery
23 County, deputy sheriff of Baltimore City, Montgomery County correctional officer, deputy
24 sheriff of Prince George's County, or Prince George's County correctional officer who is
25 eligible for benefits under subsection (a), (b), (c), [or] (d), **OR (E)** of this section or the
26 dependents of those individuals shall receive the benefits in addition to any benefits that
27 the individual or the dependents of the individual are entitled to receive under the
28 retirement system in which the individual was a participant at the time of the claim.

29 (2) The benefits received under this title shall be adjusted so that the
30 weekly total of those benefits and retirement benefits does not exceed the weekly salary
31 that was paid to an individual specified under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

32 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
33 October 1, 2024.