



Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association

1501 Pennsylvania Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21742
301-714-0812
www.wcvfr.org

To: The Honorable Members of the Washington County Delegation, Senator George Edwards, Senator Andrew Serifini, Senator Ronald Young, Delegate William Wivell, Delegate Michael McKay, Delegate Paul Corderman, Delegate Neil Parrott, Delegate Karen Young, Delegate Carol Krimm, Delegate Ken Kerr

To: Economic Matters Committee, Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair, Honorable Kathleen M Dumais Vice Chair.

Re: House Bill: 810 Workers' Compensation – Washington County – Volunteer Company – Fire and 2 Rescue Academy Student

I wish to Express our extreme support for this bill and strongly urge you to pass this legislation so that we may give all high school juniors in Washington County an opportunity to participate in this Cadet Training Program.

The Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association created our 2 year cadet program for high school juniors and seniors many years ago, and with the support of the Washington County Government and recently with our partnership with the Washington County Board of Education this program has evolved into a national award winning program within the Washington County Technical High School. This program has also received an award from the Maryland Department of Education.

At the end of the 2 year program the students are fully trained Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians ready for immediate employment anywhere in the US along with receiving 16 college credit hours should they wish to continue on to college. The Training classes are taught by MFRI instructors and other basic support services are provided by the Board of Education or the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association.

Each student is required to join a volunteer fire or ems company in Washington County to be covered by the volunteer workmen's compensation insurance. All students are required to be at least 16 years of age at the beginning of the school year to participate in this program. All students are vetted by the board of education to verify that they have the grade point average and student history to handle the college level classes of the program thus ensuring we have only the best and brightest young men and women in our program.

However, if an otherwise qualified, Junior in High School, student is not 16 years of age prior to the beginning of the school year they cannot be accepted as our workmen's compensation insurance is not available to anyone under age 16.

This limits the student's future prospects and denies access to a public school sponsored vocational training program by those otherwise qualified students who happen to have been born in September, October, November or December. This Bill allows those students who will turn 16 years old during the school year to be allowed to participate in the program.

Dale Fishack – President - 301-331-3557 - dfishack@wcvfr.org

Since our class size is limited this bill has no fiscal impact as it only allows slightly younger qualified candidates to participate if there is a position available; otherwise another student will be in that spot.

The students are strictly involved in classroom activities during the early part of the school year and the soon to be 16 year old student would not be exposed to any practical application of training until after they turn 16. So the risk is limited as well.

We wish to reiterate that our support of this bill is unequivocal and we ask for your support and passage of this bill to provide equal opportunities for high school students in Washington County.

Thank you for your consideration
Respectfully Submitted,

Dale Fishack
President
Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association