

PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF MARYLAND



DATE: February 21, 2023

TO: Senator Melony Griffith, Chair
Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Buddle, President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

RE: SB377 – Workers Compensation – Benefits - Offset & Hearing Loss

The Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland represents more than 10,000 active and retired professional fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel who proudly serve the citizens of the State of Maryland.

The intent of this important legislation would be to reverse the Maryland Court of Appeals decision in Patrick Spevak v. Montgomery County, Maryland, No. 44, September Term, 2021. Additionally, this legislation would make important adjustments pertaining to hearing loss and tinnitus to remove certain age-based penalties.

We concur with the dissenting opinion of the Honorable Shirley M. Watts in the Spevak decision. Judge Watts masterfully details both the legislative and case law history that had been in place and reaffirmed for nearly 3 decades. Attached for review is a copy of the Court of Appeals decision. Judge Watts dissent begins on page 22 of the decision.

On behalf of the members of Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 377.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Buddle".

Jeffrey Buddle, President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

The membership of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland includes 25 local IAFF affiliates from the following jurisdictions:

Federal: *Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Fort George G. Meade, National Capital Federal Fire Fighters, National Institutes of Health*

State: *Baltimore / Washington International Airport*

Local: *Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City (2 affiliates), Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Charles County, Cumberland, Frederick County, Garrett County, Hagerstown, Howard County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince Georges County, Queen Annes County, Salisbury, Talbot County, Worchester County*