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March 5, 2024

TO: The Honorable Pam Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Rhea L. Harris
Deputy Chief, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 476 -Workers' Compensation - Occupational Disease
Presumptions - First Responders (Caring for Public Employees in the Safety
Professions - CAPES Act) - **Support**

The Office of the Attorney General respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 476 – Workers Compensation- Occupational Disease Presumptions- First Responders (Caring for Public Employees in the Safety Professions- CAPES Act).

Senate Bill 476 provides that firefighters, firefighting instructors, rescue squad members, advanced life support unit members, and members of the Office of the State Fire Marshal who have thyroid, colon, or ovarian cancer are presumed, under contact with toxic substances in the line of duty, to have an occupational disease that was suffered in the line of duty and is compensable under workers' compensation law.

Senate Bill 476 includes firefighters diagnosed with thyroid, colon, and ovarian cancer to the list of similar individuals to the presumption that the illness is a result of contact with toxic substances in the line of duty. This will allow said individuals to receive benefits to cover the care

costs of these diseases. As the medical universe learns more about the causes of these diseases, benefit coverage should expand to include the people suffering from the disease.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 476.

cc: Finance Committee Members