

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTING THE VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMS PERSONNEL OF MARYLAND.



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HB 190: Workers' Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – First Responders

My name is Robert Phillips, I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA). The MSFA represents the 25,000 plus volunteer Fire/EMS and Rescue first responders across the state.

I wish to present testimony in favor of House Bill 190: Workers' Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – First Responders

The MSFA fully supports the adoption of this bill. We have seen first hand the toll that is taken mentally on our volunteer and career firefighter on a daily basis. We in the fire service have made many changes in the way we approach the emergencies that we are called to on a daily basis. At one time we had one of the highest fatality rates in all of industry. We have been able to lower our fatality rates to historic lows due to our efforts. The sad fact now is that we are losing more of our members to self inflicted suicide than we lose to response issues. We need for our members to be diagnosed and treated at an earlier time and that our working environment is the primary reason for this trend. PTSD is a real problem and we need real help with treating it and acknowledging that it is a workplace issue.

I thank the committee for their time and attention to this important bill and ask that you vote favorable on House Bill 190.

I will now be glad to answer any questions, or my contact information is listed above and welcome any further inquiries you might have.

