

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

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



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HB 626: Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Public Safety Volunteers

My name is Robert Phillips and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State FireFighter's Association (MSFA). The MSFA represents the 35,000 plus fire/EMS volunteers across the state of Maryland.

I wish to present testimony in favor of **House Bill 626: Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Public Safety Volunteers**

This bill increases the amount of income subtraction available to the Volunteer Firefighter, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services responder. The income subtraction is a valuable tool used by the volunteer fire service to recruit and retain new and present firefighters. As we all know the act of volunteering is a shrinking idea in today's society. Anything that we can use to bring in new and maintain present volunteers is very important. Local governments struggle with budgets and the loss of the volunteer fire service could be a crushing blow to county budgets and the communities that they serve if no longer available to provide their services.

If a four person engine crew were to have the \$10,000 income tax subtraction it would amount to less than \$700 dollars each or \$2400 dollars per year. If the four person crew were to be replaced with a career crew the cost for a labor/benefit package would be \$1,000,000 dollars. This is a real return on investment.

I thank the committee for their time and attention to this important bill and ask that you vote **favorable** on House Bill 626.

I will be glad to answer any questions you might have now, or my contact information is listed above for future inquires.