



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS & PARAMEDICS ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF FIRE FIGHTERS, LOCAL 1619

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January 28th, 2025

Prince George's County Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics Association
IAFF Local 1619
3060 Mitchellville Rd.
Suite 217
Bowie, MD 20716

RE: Favorable Support for HB 0205

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to ask for your support of House Bill 0205 a crucial piece of legislation that will directly impact the well-being and safety of our firefighters: a bill that would mandate overtime pay for any firefighter who works more than 42 hours on average in a 28 day cycle. As the President of IAFF Local 1619, representing nearly 1,800 active and retired Maryland Fire Fighters, I believe this bill is necessary to protect the physical and mental health of our firefighting professionals and ensure that they have the support they need to continue to serve our community.

In Prince George's County, we have contractual protections that already provide this crucial benefit for our Fire Fighters, it is well past time that all Maryland Fire Fighters have this same protection. Similar to how most Maryland workers make overtime after 40 hours, Fire Fighters are just asking for the same type of workplace protections. In some of our largest jurisdictions in the state (Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Howard County, Frederick County) we are failing to provide a fairness and equity.

By mandating overtime pay after 42 hours of work, we can:

1. **Promote firefighter well-being:** Extended work hours without proper rest contribute to fatigue, which can impair judgment, reaction time, and overall performance. Ensuring adequate compensation for overtime will provide an incentive for departments to hire additional staff and prevent overworking their personnel.
2. **Improve public safety:** Well-rested firefighters are more effective in responding to emergencies, making critical decisions, and maintaining peak performance under stress. This will ultimately lead to better outcomes for our communities during emergencies.
3. **Uphold fairness across Maryland:** Firefighters put their lives on the line every day, and it is only right that their time, energy, and sacrifices are recognized and compensated fairly.

I urge you to consider the long-term benefits of this bill, not only for the health and safety of firefighters but for the safety of all residents in our communities. Your support would send a clear message that our state values those who dedicate their lives to public service, and that we are committed to providing them with the resources and workplace protections they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I would be happy to discuss this further if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,
Grant Walker

President IAFF Local 1619
240-285-6286