

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
-a 501(c)3 Organization*



Legislative Committee

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House Bill 217: Workers Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions - Hypertension

My name is Dale Bowen and I am a member of the Legislative Committee for the Maryland State Firefighter's Association (MSFA).

I wish to present favorable testimony for **House Bill 217: Workers Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions - Hypertension**

The MSFA is in full support of HB 217. Hypertension affects almost half of American adults, however, the rate of high-blood pressure among firefighters is much higher, with about three out of four affected. Hypertension raises the risk of heart attack and stroke, and more than half of deaths among firefighters in the line of duty are related to cardiovascular disease.

This bill outlines the requirements to demonstrate disablement due to hypertension. It allows for those who have been medicated for 90 days and still present with hypertension to meet the occupational disease presumptions under workers' compensation law.

First responders with hypertension experienced a greater blood pressure surge in response to alarms than their non-hypertensive co-workers.

It is time for us to recognize hypertension as an occupational disease and for this reason I request a favorable vote on House Bill 217.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Dale Bowen