

Chairman Feldman and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Howard County Fire and Rescue Local 2000 in support of SB-1024, and respectfully request a favorable report.

Many of Maryland's dedicated firefighters reside outside the state. In the unfortunate event that a firefighter loses their life in the line of duty, particularly due to a work-related illness such as cancer, it is crucial that we take all necessary steps to ensure their families are supported. Currently, when a firefighter succumbs to cancer, the family is not eligible for Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) from the federal government.

Moreover, children of these fallen heroes should not be penalized for seeking an education in the state where their parent served. We must prioritize ensuring that these children have access to educational opportunities without facing financial barriers, so they can thrive and fulfill the aspirations their parent would have wanted for them.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Brad Klukas
Howard County Fire and Rescue
Local 2000