

Testimony for Ways and Means Committee

Good afternoon Madame Chair and Madame Vice Chair and Honorable members of the **Ways and Means Committee**,

First, I wish to thank you all for the chance to testify the committee on House Bill 815.

My name is Allen Roody and I have 47 years as a volunteer Fire and EMS Provider in Baltimore County. I also served as a career fire Lieutenant in the Baltimore County Fire Department. I also serve as the Chairman of the BCVFA LOSAP Board.

Needless to say, I've seen several changes, many good, some not so good in my time.

One of the unfortunate changes has been the decline of dedicated volunteers, not just in Baltimore County or Maryland, but throughout the entire nation! The requirements have grown exponentially, making it more and more difficult to recruit and retain volunteer fire and EMS personnel.

In 1996, a law was passed, allowing active members with so many years to deduct a certain amount from their state income taxes. While this amount has increased, with much gratitude, it has been held at the current amount for several years.

We are very much in favor of HB-815. In the long run, the amount it computes to pales in comparison to what the state is receiving in the return. The maximum amount the increase can compute to is \$225.00.

We have seen this to be a monumental tool, which not only keeps members active, but also encourages the current members to volunteer extra to reach their requirement. The services provided by the volunteer fire and EMS personnel, all across Maryland save the taxpayers millions of dollars over having to replace them with staffed career personnel. Please also understand that of the ones who qualify, many cannot use it since they've moved out of state.

I'd like to thank Delegate Stein for sponsoring this proposal. I thank you all for your time and respectfully request that you support your volunteer first responders by with a favorable vote for HB-815.