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SB 445 - Employment Standards - Firefighters - Payment of Wages and Payroll Information

Senate Finance Committee

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SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 445. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

SB 445 seeks to establish clear parameters for fair and transparent compensation for firefighters.

Firefighters routinely place their lives on the line to protect our communities. It is a physically and mentally demanding job that requires unwavering dedication, bravery, sacrifice, and a commitment to public safety. The nature of their work oftentimes requires long and irregular hours, with many firefighters having to work overtime to meet the demands of their community. Despite this, there remains inequitable compensation practices, perpetuating wage disparities and unfair and deceptive treatment.

SB 445 aims to directly address these concerns by ensuring greater fairness, transparency, and accountability within firefighter pay. This legislation does a number of things; it requires governmental units to compute overtime wages equitably; enables governmental units to provide clear payroll information to every firefighter; and, allows for firefighters or their representatives to file grievances if these standards are not upheld. This bill helps to eliminate certain disparities and administrative challenges to protect against wage miscalculations and relieve the burdens of navigating compensation issues that often fall on the firefighters themselves.

Fair and transparent compensation is a small step in recognizing the profound work that these individuals do day in and day out. Given the inherent stress and immense responsibility of this line of work, firefighters should not have to worry about being paid fairly for shouldering such impactful service.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on SB 445.



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