

As a lifelong county resident and career firefighter of Montgomery County, Maryland, I want to express my concerns for my community, coworkers, family, and friends.

The issues that are secondary to an extensive work schedule, lack of sleep, and occupational hazards are numerous. Stress on your body, mentality, family life, recovery time, relationships, financial concerns, are all heavily affected by only a few of many contributing factors.

Firefighters are asked to perform their duties for 24 hours out of the day, which often results in them using the following day for sleep and recovery, not for daily living activities. And due to the 24 hours on, 48 hours off schedule that, in the end, allows us with about 1 day to adjust to a normal sleep schedule and mentally prepare for another shift. It throws one for a tumultuous ride of stress, fatigue, and anxiety fueled by caffeine and possibly other substances to manage.

Poor job performance and injuries can be related to over working. When one needs to work overtime, as a result of being forced to work or for financial issues, they need to work more than 24 hours at a time, most often 34 to 48 hours at a time. That in correlation with high call volumes can affect patient care, emergency response, and safety for everyone involved.

Myself among many others like me seek fair treatment and fair compensation for our sacrifices. If we cannot currently achieve the progressive standard of a healthy work schedule like many of our neighboring fire departments, then we are urging to push SB0445 so that we can begin to affect change. You have our support.