

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Bill Expanding Firefighters Cancer Relief Program Passes House

HARTFORD — Wednesday night, lawmakers in the House of Representatives voted favorably on legislation to expand the Firefighters Cancer Relief Program to reimburse eligible firefighters for insurance deductibles and laboratory and diagnostic testing fees.

“I am proud to stand with firefighters and advocate on their behalf. They risk their lives to protect us, and I am happy that we can continue to support them and thank them for their service,” said **Deputy Speaker Michelle Cook, D – Torrington**, who championed [the bill](#) to better serve firefighters. “A number of firefighters have developed cancer related to their line of duty, and we must fight to make sure they have the resources necessary to take care of their health.”

“On behalf of the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association of Connecticut, we thank and appreciate **Rep. Cook's** continued support of Connecticut's firefighters. This bill provides real relief for firefighters battling cancer, by ensuring their medical bills are being paid while receiving treatment. It is an important safeguard for our firefighters and their families,” said Rick Hart, Director of Legislative/Political Affairs of the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut.

Rep. Cook was instrumental in the establishment of the relief fund in 2016 to replace lost wages of firefighters diagnosed with certain types of cancer resulting from their service as paid municipal or volunteer firefighters, as well as related administrative expenses.

The program's funding is available to firefighters with several types of cancer, including brain, skin, skeletal, digestive, and respiratory, that have resulted in death, temporary or permanent disability.

According to the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#), firefighters are more likely to develop forms of digestive, oral, respiratory and urinary cancers compared to the general U.S. population, and the probability of developing cancer increases with the number of fire runs conducted as well as the amount of time spend at fires.

The [Centers for Disease Control](#) has established a national cancer registry to analyze broader data to provide a more complete representation of the amount of firefighters who have died from cancer. This data includes statistics on under-studied groups like women, minorities and volunteer firefighters.

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