

The Connecticut General Assembly



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REP. COOK APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF HB 5262:

Bill will create a wage replacement program for firefighters who contract cancer

State Representative Michelle Cook (D-Torrington) is pleased to announce that the firefighter's cancer bill she has championed for has passed the House of Representatives.

H.B.5262, An Act Concerning Workers Compensation Coverage for Current and Former Uniformed Members of Paid or Volunteer Firefighters, would establish a relief fund used for wage replacement of those who are diagnosed with certain conditions of cancer as a result of their service as paid municipal or volunteer firefighters.

"I have fought for passage of this bill for several months and I am extremely pleased that it has passed the House with a unanimous vote," **Rep. Cook said**. "I have met a number of firefighters who have contracted cancer while serving the community and I have made it my mission to fight for their health and safety. It is extremely important to ensure our firefighters have the proper protections for the risks they take to keep us safe. As first responders, they sacrifice their lives to save ours, and they deserve this compensation. I am proud to stand with them."

"Our brave firefighters put their lives on the line every day to protect our families and neighborhoods, and ensuring they are provided for if they develop cancers caused by fighting fires is our responsibility as a community," **Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden)** said. "This bill is a testament to the hard work by Rep. Michelle Cook to bring multiple groups with differing interests together to support legislation that passed unanimously, and it wouldn't have been possible without her taking the lead."

"When we work together across party lines we do our best work," **House Republican Leader Themis Klarides** said. "This bill extends greater protections for our firefighters but also preserves the rights of our towns and cities. This was a long time coming but a lot of hard work produced a winner for all parties."

"I was enormously honored to have been asked to negotiate on behalf of the House Republican Leader Themis Klarides on this important issue and work with all the different stakeholders to broker a

compromise bill everyone can support,” **State Rep. Dave Rutigliano (R-Trumbull)** said. “From the beginning, the goal of any compromise legislation has been to provide our local firefighters who are diagnosed with certain cancers linked to the very dangerous job of fighting fires with necessary support and coverage they deserve while not overburdening our local cities and towns and this bill accomplishes that.”

The bill will also apply to firefighters who are no longer actively serving but who otherwise would be eligible for wage replacement benefits. These firefighters may apply for such benefits no more than five years from the date such individual last served.

In addition to providing wage benefits, this bill also requires firefighters to take preventative measures to avoid contracting cancer. Eligibility for the relief fund requires firefighters to maintain a healthy lifestyle and undergo regular pre-screening for cancer.

The bill will now go before the Senate Chamber for a vote.