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Testimony of Representative Amy Roeder presenting

LD 1440, “An Act To Provide Safe Gear for Female Firefighters”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good afternoon Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Amy Roeder, and I represent House District 125, which includes part of Bangor. I am here today to present **LD 1440, An Act To Provide Safe Gear for Female Firefighters.**

LD 1440 appropriates \$500,000 in fiscal year 2021 - 2022 for the State Fire Marshal to provide grants to municipal fire departments, volunteer fire associations and fire districts to purchase safe and properly fitting personal protective equipment and gear for female firefighters.

Our firefighters do far more than fight fires. They respond to traffic accidents, medical emergencies, natural disasters and more. They require fitted work attire that will allow them to move quickly in the fast-paced environments they work in. Our female firefighters should not need to worry about their gear holding them back from tending to a burning building or assisting a community member during crisis.

Ill-fitting personal protective equipment and gear exposes firefighters to chemicals and toxins that can have prolonged impacts on their health. Many studies have shown that firefighters have an increased risk of multiple types of cancers as compared to the general population because of their constant exposure to hazardous chemicals.

Without the proper tools, how can we expect firefighters to help keep our communities safe while also keeping themselves safe and healthy? This isn't a public safety issue that these firefighters should have to face alone or on their own dime.

We have the means to protect some of our most treasured public servants, and we should make sure all of our local firefighters are as safe as possible on the job. Providing well-fitting personal protective equipment and gear is the bare minimum.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

District 125: Bangor (part)