



Professional Firefighters of Hampden, Maine
IAFF Local 4903

AFFILIATED: INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS.
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS OF MAINE.
AFL-CIO, CLC



Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and other esteemed members of the labor committee. Good afternoon my name is Chris Liepold I live in Milford and and I work as a Fire Lieutenant and Paramedic for the town of Hampden Local 4903 Professional Firefighters of Hampden. I am here to testify and support of LD 82.

I've worked in the fire service for 22 years since I was 18 years old I started as a fire science live in student for the town of Milford and progressed and started my career working for the city of Old Town as a Firefighter/Paramedic for Professional Firefighters of Old Town Local 1655. I've been fortunate to work as a Fire Lieutenant and Paramedic for the town of Hampden for the last nine years as well as serving as the Vice President for Local 4903 Professional Firefighters of Hampden.

Within the last five years, I've been diagnosed with post traumatic stress syndrome disorder or otherwise know as post traumatic stress injury. It is not something that I was prepared for, but it is something that I will have to live with for the rest of my life. I first started to notice symptoms of my disorder shortly after the birth of my second child in 2016. I noticed that I start to have increasing bouts of anxiety, moments of depression as well as reliving calls that I've been on previously trying to figure out if I've done everything that I possibly could do to save human life. The weight that first responders have to bear on a daily basis can be crushing at times. Having worked through the pandemic, none of us could've been prepared for being on the front lines of the largest public health crisis in our country history. Or prepared for what these events plus the countless others that we encounter in the course of our daily duties have done to our personal mental health. As I've gotten older and within the last 4 years, I've had instances of severe panic disorder, hospitalization and counseling. I'm still able to perform all my duties and live a very rewarding life, but I am one of the lucky ones. There are others, including friends of ours people that we've worked with who are not sure fortunate, and we have lost way too many people in our profession to this..

i've watched firsthand while members and friends of mine working in the fire service have struggled with their own mental health problems that originated from the repetative and cullumtive stress and trauma that unfortunately makes up our daily job responsibilities. Ive watched them struggle to maintain a regular life. many of these struggles that have resulted in these once proud, strong representatives of our fire service being no longer able to perform their duties.

LD 82 prioritizes our first responders and allows for all of us in the fire service to have a little bit more peace of mind. As leaders in our state, we constantly tell individuals to prioritize their mental health to take care of themselves to look out for each other. It's pushed at the state level

at the local level and our schools and our homes. I'm asking this committee to do the same I want to thank you the committee for your time and ask that you vote unanimously to pass for LD 82 thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Liepold
Vice President Local 4903

Chris Liepold
Milford
LD 82
Testimony attached