

Stephanie Richard  
Portland

Good morning

My name is Stephanie Richard. I am a fire fighter for the city of Portland and have been for 4 years.

In the fire service, males and females are held to the same standard of what is expected of us. We have to pass the same tests, meet the same physical expectations, fight the same fires, and service our community. There are no exceptions for women in this job. We fight fires the same as the men, we run ems calls the same, we do the job the same. I was the only female in my drill school, and in our first week we were told the risk of all of us contracting cancer as a result of this job. We get refreshers on it annually, and are kept up to date on the greatest ways to reduce our risks.

The only difference between me, and the fireman next to me, is that his reproductive cancer will be covered for him under the Maine Workers Comp Presumptive Law. We will both go through the same hardships of this job. The stress, the exhaustion, the heartbreak, and the health concerns. But if he and I both contract reproductive cancers, he will be the only one who is covered under presumptive law.

This is blatantly unfair and unsafe for the females in this job. I ask, out of common sense, that you help approve this bill. Females in the fire house are a common site these days, and it's important that we're all protected from our risks as much as the men.

Thank you for listening to us today.