



Maine Municipal
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition to
LD 467, *An Act To Support E-9-1-1 Dispatchers and Corrections Officers Diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorders*

March 1, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Kate Dufour and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 467 on behalf of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee.

The Association's opposition to this bill should not be construed to suggest that municipal leaders are unappreciative of the vital services provided by E-9-1-1 dispatchers, all of which serve to protect property, save lives and support the efforts of first responders.

However, municipal officials are strongly opposed with shifting the burden this presumption of work place injury places on limited public sector resources.

Legislative enactment of presumptions come with a price tag that is borne solely by the property taxpayers in communities that offer protective services. Emergency services are provided whether a person involved in an emergency is a resident or a visitor. Enacting laws, without adequately funding related costs, simply shifts additional burdens onto the backs of the few who fund the services available to all.

Furthermore, there is a concern that through the escalating implementation of the rebuttable presumption, Workers' Compensation policy is being targeted in a discriminatory way to the disadvantage of public sector employers. Municipal officials know of many private sector jobs and professions that involve danger or risk or contribute to high levels of mental stress, yet similar presumptions have not been adopted.

As a result, it is incumbent on the Legislature to ensure that this policy yields intended outcomes while respecting the burdens placed on property taxpayers and the need to treat all employers equitably.

When the post-traumatic stress disorder presumption was enacted in 2017, the law included a provision directing the Workers' Compensation Board to study related impacts. Pursuant to public law, by the end of this year the sitting members of the Labor and Housing

Committee will receive a report detailing the number and outcome of the claims filed and the costs to the State and local governments.

The data contained in the report will provide the information necessary to adequately assess the program's impacts. Municipal leaders are relying on this committee and the Legislature to honor the commitment to study before considering extending the presumption to other public employees.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the municipal perspective on this issue.