



OLATHE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Administration ▪ 1225 S. Hamilton Circle ▪ Olathe, KS 66061

Main: (913) 971-7900 ▪ www.olatheks.org/fire



Testimony on HB2024

Submitted To:
The Committee on Taxation

By:
Michael Day, Fire Captain of Community Risk Reduction
Olathe Fire Department

January 29, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this written testimony in support of HB2024. My name is Michael “Mike” Day, and I am a Fire Captain/Fire Investigator within the Community Risk Reduction Division of the Olathe Fire Department. Since starting my career in the fire service in 1994, I have dedicated myself to serving my community and protecting public safety.

I am a career Fire Investigator and a cancer survivor. In 2021, I faced a personal health crisis that underscores the importance of this bill. After experiencing gastrointestinal issues, I was diagnosed with rectal cancer, and early detection and treatment were key to my survival. The journey through diagnosis and treatment was arduous, but I am grateful for the support and medical care I received. I was fortunate to be able to afford the cost of my cancer screening, but not everyone in the fire service can bear those extra costs.

My experience highlights the critical need for policies that reduce the financial burden of cancer screening costs on firefighters and fire investigators, who are at greater risk for various types of cancer due to the nature of our work. By providing a tax credit for firefighters, and, as explained below, for Fire Investigators who incur unreimbursed medical expenses for screening for occupation-related cancer, HB 2024 will provide financial relief and incentive to individuals like me to obtain lifesaving cancer screening.

Research shows that cancer is the leading threat to firefighter health and safety. According to the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, cancer caused 65% of career firefighter line-of-duty deaths from 2002 to 2021. Firefighters are 9% more likely to be



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diagnosed with cancer than the general U.S. population and 14% more likely to die from it.¹

I support this legislation, but I feel it is important to clarify in the bill that all fire investigators, including commissioned law enforcement officers assigned to fire investigations and non-commissioned fire department employees who are exposed to fire scenes, are included.

Fire investigators have similar, or in some instances, increased cancer risks compared to firefighters. The International Association of Arson Investigators authored a health and safety best practices White Paper, which concluded that fire investigators generally are at more fire scenes than most firefighters, face higher exposure risks to toxic hazards, and typically wear less personal protective equipment while investigating fire scenes.² Including fire investigations in the classification of individuals who can receive the tax credit described in this bill will help protect those who face the same or greater risk of cancer.

Firefighting and fire investigations have always posed increased risks to the health and safety of those who serve, and we in the service understand those risks, but this bill will provide us a layer of support that I am confident will save lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Day

¹ <https://www.firefightercancersupport.org/who-we-are/about-us>

² <https://www.firearson.com/media/exnp1434/fire-investigator-health-and-safety-best-practices-3rd-edition.pdf>