

**Written Testimony on House Bill 2024**  
**House Committee on Taxation**  
**Mark Engholm, State Fire Marshal**  
**January 29, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Kansas House Bill 2024, which would grant Kansas firefighters a \$250 annual tax credit to assist with the cost of cancer screenings. This bill represents a vital step toward protecting those who dedicate their lives to protecting us.

Our firefighters and fire investigators face significantly higher risks of developing cancer due to their repeated exposure to toxic chemicals, hazardous smoke, and carcinogenic materials in the line of duty. Studies have shown that firefighters are more likely to develop certain types of cancer—including mesothelioma, lung cancer, and multiple myeloma—than the general population. This heightened risk underscores the critical importance of early detection, which can save lives by catching cancer at a more treatable stage.

Unfortunately, the cost of annual cancer screenings can be prohibitive for many firefighters, particularly those in volunteer or rural departments who often work without comprehensive health benefits. HB 2024 addresses this barrier by providing a modest but meaningful \$250 annual tax credit to help cover the expense of these lifesaving screenings. This measure not only alleviates financial stress but also reinforces our state's commitment to the health and well-being of our first responders.

Early detection is a proven strategy for improving cancer survival rates. Routine screenings enable the identification of abnormalities before symptoms appear, allowing for prompt intervention and potentially less aggressive treatment. By incentivizing annual cancer screenings, HB 2024 will empower firefighters to prioritize their health and reduce the long-term costs associated with late-stage cancer diagnoses—both for the individuals affected and for the healthcare system as a whole.

After reviewing House Bill 2024, I request that the committee consider amending the definition of “firefighter” in the bill to ensure that fire investigators, like the Special Agents of the State Fire Marshal, who routinely work in toxic, carcinogenic environments are clearly included in those who are eligible for the tax credit.

The passage of this bill would send a powerful message of gratitude and support to Kansas firefighters. These brave men and women put their lives on the line daily to protect our communities. They deserve

every available resource to safeguard their own health. HB 2024 is a pragmatic and compassionate measure that honors their service and addresses an urgent public health need.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge you to pass Kansas House Bill 2024 out favorably with the amendment suggested to ensure protection of fire investigators. By supporting this legislation, you will be making an investment in the lives of those who selflessly serve our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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