



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 484		DATE: 2/9/2021	
COMMITTEE: Public Safety			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CORY HOGAN		PHONE NUMBER: 6363681704	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI STATE COUNCIL OF FIREFIGHTERS		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS ADVISOR	
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On behalf of the over 8,000 line firefighters, EMS Workers and Dispatchers in our State the Missouri State Council of Firefighters submit the following testimony; Firefighting is an inherently dangerous occupation and there is growing concern regarding behavioral health among firefighters and the significant impact on wellness¹. The stresses faced by firefighters and other first responders throughout the course of their careers – including incidents involving children, violence, inherent dangers of firefighting and other potentially traumatic events – can have a cumulative impact on mental health and well-being¹. Although many firefighters are remarkably resilient, research suggests that many suffer negative psychological consequences from their experiences including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and suicide². Here are some of the behavioral health issues that have been documented among firefighters: Depression. Evidence suggests that rates of depression and depressive symptomatology among fire and EMS personnel is higher than the general population³. Pyle (Jahnke) and colleagues found nearly 16% of participants in a study of firefighters in the Midwest were within the clinical range of depression⁴. In a large, population-based study of both career and volunteer firefighters, Haddock and colleagues found between 11.8%-26.5% of firefighters surveyed were in the range of concern for depression⁵. These rates are higher than the national average for depression which affects about 7.1% of US adults⁶. PTSD/PTSI. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) refers to a psychological disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event⁷. Post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) is a newer term that refers to a biological injury that develops after a person has experienced or witnessed a terrifying event⁸. While only an estimated 3.6% of US adults had PTSD/PTSI in the past year⁷, it is estimated that between 14.6-22% of firefighters report symptoms of post-traumatic stress^{9–11}. Suicide. While research is limited, suicidality is a significant public health concern among firefighters¹². Firefighters have reported higher rates of suicidal ideation, plans, and attempts (46.8%, 19.2%, and 15.5%, respectively) as compared to both general (5.6–14.3%, 3.9%, and 1.9–8.7%, respectively) and military (3.8–13.9%, 5.3%, and 0.4–2.4%, respectively) populations^{13–15}. The Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA) reported that in 2020, 90 firefighters committed suicide; this number was 120 in 2019.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: D. SCOTT PENMAN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-690-6772	
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REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: J TRENT FORD		PHONE NUMBER: 3144096812	
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REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: MIKE WINTER		PHONE NUMBER: 573 230-6644
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We have concerns about the broadening of the definitions to include the wide range of persons covered by the legislation. The bill also essentially reverses the holding in Mantia v. MODot that compares the claimant’s exposure to stress to others in his/her occupation and not to a reasonable person standard in determining if the stress was unusual or extraordinary. We also have concerns with a person getting a rebuttable presumption that the PTSD is work related. Some of those defined in the bill will get a rebuttable assumption the PTSD was work related without having been a party to seeing the the events. Due to these reasons we respectfully oppose the bill.