

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



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REP. COOK REINTRODUCES BILLS TO HELP FIREFIGHTERS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER

State Representative Michelle Cook (D- Torrington) has submitted two bills this session to help firefighters who are diagnosed with cancer resulting from their work.

"Firefighters put their lives on the line to keep us safe each and every day. They run into burning buildings to ensure that you and your family make it out alive, with no guarantee that they will. That is why I introduced legislation to make sure firefighters are cared for if they suffer from cancer as a result of their important work," said Rep. Cook.

Rep. Cook introduced a bill calling for short-term and long-term disability coverage and reintroduced a bill expanding workers' compensation for firefighters diagnosed with cancer as a result of their work.

"Last session, helping our firefighters who are diagnosed with cancer was one of my top priorities and it will remain a top priority this year as well," said Rep. Cook. "Over the past several months I have had the privilege of working with legislators from across the aisle, local municipal leaders, CCM, and the firefighters unions to improve on last year's legislation. I look forward to continuing this work and getting this done for the firefighters who keep us safe," Rep. Cook added.

The Center for Disease Control recently conducted a study of more than 30,000 firefighters and found that they had "twice as many malignant mesothelioma cases than expected." The report suggests that, "firefighters are at a higher risk of cancers of the digestive, oral, respiratory, and urinary systems." Many other studies have arrived at the same conclusion: If you are a firefighter, you are more likely to develop cancer.

"Rep. Cook has always been a staunch supporter of our first responders, and has led the way at the Capitol in working to ensure our firefighters have the proper protections for the risks they take every day to help keep us all safe," said **Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden)**. "Michelle has made this issue a personal priority, bringing all stakeholders together in an effort to pass bipartisan legislation that will provide the coverages and peace of mind our local firefighters deserve in every community they serve."

“Michelle Cook deserves a lot of credit for all of the work she has done on behalf of firefighters in Connecticut,” said **House Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz (D-Berlin/Southington)**. “Over the past two years, she has worked diligently to ensure that our firefighters and their families are appropriately compensated if they are diagnosed with cancer as a result of the noble work they do every day.”

“The Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association is encouraged by the continued discussions between our Organization, CCM, and the Legislators involved, especially Rep. Michelle Cook. The collaborative effort put forth by all involved has given us hope that our members and their families will finally have the protections necessary through passage of this important legislation this session. Our members are suffering from occupational cancer diagnoses at an alarming rate and this legislation will allow them to concentrate on getting the treatment necessary and to return to work,” **Peter S. Carozza Jr. President, Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association.**

"I appreciate Representative Cook's efforts and her willingness to work with us on this and many other important issues," said **Joe DeLong, Executive Director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)**.