

MN House Public & Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Committee  
State Office Building  
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr Blvd  
St Paul, MN 55155

February 11th, 2021

Dear Chairperson Mariani,

I am writing to you today in support of House File 377, The Hometown Heroes Assistance Act.

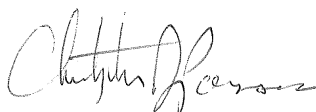
The wide range of emergency services fire departments provide can exact a heavy toll on the men and women who take on such duties. Repeated exposure to toxic chemicals, sleep disturbances, traumatic calls, etc., all conspire to sicken firefighters with cancer, cardiac issues, and mental injuries at rates much greater than the general population. In fact, a growing body of evidence has found that firefighters acquire and die from cancer, suffer fatal heart attacks, and take their own lives at rates much greater than the general public.

Minnesota's fire service has taken significant steps in recent years to help mitigate the dangers we face but there is still much to do. The Hometown Heroes Assistance Act will:

1. Provide a "Critical Care" policy for all Minnesota firefighters which covers diagnoses of cancer and cardiac issues. Coverage amount is \$30,000 per diagnosis.
2. Provide ongoing MnFIRE Awareness training for every firefighter in the state to help foster better practices and reduce the incidence of cancer, cardiac issues, and emotional trauma.
3. Create a firefighter specific Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all Minnesota firefighters targeting emotional trauma issues unique to the fire service.
4. Provides MnFIRE Awareness training for medical and mental health providers statewide. Firefighters will have regional access to medical professionals that are informed and trained in firefighter occupational cancer, cardiac, and mental health issues.

This bill will greatly benefit all 22,000 Minnesota firefighters from the the very first day it is enacted. Please join us in support of this very important legislation.

Sincerely,



Chris Parsons, President  
Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters