



April 14, 2026

Chair Paul Novotny, Chair Kelly Moller and Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

RE: HF 4446 DE2--Survivor benefits eligibility expanded to include when a public safety officer dies in the line of duty from an exposure-related cancer or infectious disease

Dear Chair Novotny, Chair Moller and Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of our 842 member cities, the League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on HF 4446 DE2, a bill that would expand survivor benefits eligibility retroactively to 2020 to include when a public safety officer dies in the line of duty from an exposure-related cancer or infectious disease.

The League is proud to support public safety employees and honors the service they provide to our communities statewide. We have helped cities implement wellness and peer support programs and other best practices to keep public safety employees safe and healthy. When an officer is injured, sickened or killed in the line of duty, cities and the League have provided resources to assist officers and their families.

Of the 22,000 firefighters in Minnesota, approximately 18,000 are paid on-call, and 16,000 are employed by cities. The inclusion of these positions to current line of duty protections and to make the statutory change retroactive to 2020 represents a significant expansion of benefits. It is therefore critical to obtain a proper estimate of the state and local fiscal impact before it advances.

Below are two concerns about this legislation that have been identified:

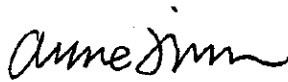
1. The dependent health care obligation under Minn. Stat. § 299A.465 would apply to employers if an officer dies from one of the specified cancers. Minn. Stat. § 299A.465 provides that health insurance for dependents must be provided “when a peace officer, firefighter, or volunteer firefighter is killed while on duty and discharging the officer's, firefighter's, or volunteer firefighter's duties as a peace officer, firefighter, or volunteer firefighter.” While the state is currently reimbursing employers for the cost of this benefit, the \$100 million one-time appropriation for this purpose in 2023 has been depleted to approximately one-third of the appropriation. Our concern is the financial burden of this statutorily required benefit will revert to employers in the absence of an ongoing state

appropriation.

2. The bill comes close to creating a presumption that most cancers are work-related if the employee is a public safety officer, even though it is difficult to definitively prove a specific cancer was caused by firefighting rather than other factors, such as genetics, smoking, alcohol use, or lifestyle choices. Additionally, many paid on-call firefighters have outside employment where they may encounter carcinogens that are unrelated to public safety work.

The League respectfully requests that this legislation not be enacted before there is time to carefully consider and address the fiscal and policy implications of the bill. The League stands ready to be part of any discussions as the bill advances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Finn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Anne Finn
Intergovernmental Relations Director