

Written Testimony for Senate Resolution 6 Commission Hearing

August 14, 2018

Presented by Edward Mann

Chair of Regulation and Codes Sub-Committee

Senator Vulakovich I want to begin by sincerely thanking you and Representative Barrar for your efforts to once again shine the light on the issues facing Pennsylvania's volunteer and career fire service and our emergency medical services. Words alone cannot truly express my appreciation for your work.

As I have indicated at several of the commission meetings I have not heard anything new, many of the issues have been discussed and reported on, in reports dating back to 1975 when Pennsylvania Burning was published. The greatest difference today versus previous reports is the fact that nothing has improved and the issues are greater today than ever before.

The future of our EMS system and our ability to provide fire protection to our communities is bleak and I believe we are only fooling ourselves if we think we can ever return to the days of old. I believe we must focus on ways to support what the system has become and where the system might be headed in the future.

If there is one thing I learned during my 14.5 year tenure as the Fire Commissioner it's the fact that without the support of the "Leadership" from both sides of the aisle and support from the Governor's Office the action needed to address the problems we face will not be addressed effectively. Please understand this is no reflection on either the House or Senate Veterans Affairs Emergency Preparedness Committees it's simply a matter of politics and the reality we all live with.

As a matter of brevity in my written testimony I will not list the issues and the possible solutions, I believe they will be addressed in the written reports that will be provided by each of the sub-committees.

In closing I'm reminded of a hearing that took place in 2005 when the House Resolution 148 Report was provided to the joint committee of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee and I was asked by Senator Lemmond if I was sounding an alarm. My answer to him was something along the lines of "No Senator I'm not sounding an alarm, we have burnt the place down and we are all standing around the foundation trying to figure out what went wrong.

We have moved beyond crisis in some communities and are headed to crisis in many other communities. The time for action is now! The men and women of the fire service and our emergency medical services deserve no less and our citizens should expect nothing less.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Ed Mann

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