



301 Chestnut Street • Suite 101 • Harrisburg, PA 17101

J. T. Pennington
President

Patrick Martin
Secretary Treasurer

Kevin Ressler
Recording Secretary

Good morning,

Thank you Chairman Stefano and Chairwoman Muth, and all members of the committee for allowing me the time to talk to everyone today on issues that concern First Responders in Pennsylvania.

My name is JT Pennington and I am the President of the Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association. The PPFPA represents over 6000 Professional Fire Fighters and Medics from 76 municipalities across the Commonwealth. Our members serve the citizens in communities such as Aliquippa, Altoona, Reading, Harrisburg, Warren, and Philadelphia to name a few.

I wanted to highlight a few issues we are dealing with every day in our communities. On May 18th we have a ballot referendum question asking the voters to allow Career Fire and EMS services to be eligible to apply for the Volunteer Loan Assistance Program. We are asking everyone for their support on this important

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issue. There is currently \$47 Million dollars and by voting yes, we would only be adding an additional 22 career fire departments to the over 2,000 volunteer fire departments already eligible. The fund was created in 1975 with tax dollars from all residents in the commonwealth and its only fair that all fire departments are eligible. Please support and vote YES for ballot question #4 on May 18th.

Everyday 1st Responders across Pennsylvania respond to emergencies assisting people who are having their worst day and sometimes we suffer and struggle from the effects of just doing our job, with some even doing the unthinkable of taking their own lives because they could not get the help the deserve.

Currently 1st Responders in Pennsylvania are not covered under the Workman's Compensation law if they are diagnosed with PTSI due to a 1990 PA Supreme Court ruling (Martin v Ketchum) that set the bar to require a mental injury claim to be the result of an abnormal working condition. We are routinely

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denied mental injury claims as we are told that the mental injury “is just part of the job”.

On January 12, 2012 while fighting a structure fire in Aliquippa, the ladder that I was standing on collapsed without warning and I fell 5 stories, injuring most of my body. As a result of the fall I required 6 surgeries to be able to return to work and 90% of my injuries were covered by worker’s comp. Guess what was not covered from the traumatic experience that I suffered doing my job and serving the citizens? The PTSI that I was diagnosed with by the cities doctor after my fall.

After my fall I was honored right here in this building, on the House and Senate floors by Representative Matzie and Senator Vogel for my actions that day while serving my community. But to be able to return to the job that I loved, I had to seek out my own care and treatment using my own time and resources to recover from the mental injury that I suffered.

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This is not right and not fair!!

Last session HB 432 has 85 Co-Sponsors from both sides of the aisle but unfortunately the bill did not make it to the floor for a vote.

On Monday April 26th, Senator Bartolotta & Senator Regan introduced a co-sponsorship memo that addresses this very issue. We are asking that join them and help take care of the people who take care of you.

We are always there when an emergency arises and the citizens of Pennsylvania need us. Now we are asking our elected officials in this building to be there for us.

Please support our First Responders and help us get the help that we need to be able to continue serving you.

Thank You

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