

Good morning, my name is Mike Bresnan, and I am currently serving as President of IAFF Local 22 Philadelphia Firefighters and Paramedics Union. I am a 31-year veteran of the Philadelphia Fire Department, holding the ranks of Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, and Battalion Chief. Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand what it takes to protect Philadelphia and what happens when the people doing that work are asked to do more with less or inadequate tools. One of our most important tools for protecting citizens and property is the Fire Apparatus our members operate to respond to emergencies. I am here today to address a critical public safety issue: the sharp rise in the cost of fire apparatus and the consequences of those increases for operational readiness, the protection of citizens, and the safety of our members.

Philadelphia has one of the largest and busiest fire departments in the country, with approximately 3,000 members who respond with over 100 firefighting apparatuses, serving a population in the city of roughly 1.6 million people and a response area spanning 143 square miles. The Philadelphia Fire Department responds to an average of 1,000 calls for help a day. Our members' response area includes high-density row houses, large apartment buildings, High-rises, Industrial buildings, and every other type of structure you can think of that are in large cities. The scale of that response area alone creates significant demand on the apparatus, but Philadelphia's physical condition makes the burden even greater. Our aging streets are littered with potholes, at times resembling the surface of the moon, and now a new addition speed bumps to apparently try to slow down reckless lawless drivers, which all add daily stress to our emergency vehicles. Beyond normal wear and mechanical use, our apparatus must operate under conditions that

accelerate deterioration, which makes the turnover rate for new apparatus even greater. In our profession, reliable equipment is essential.

That is why the recent increase in apparatus costs is so alarming. The engines or pumpers purchased by the Philadelphia Fire Department from FY20 to FY24 and the tiller ladders purchased from FY22 to FY24 are already approaching the point at which the city must begin planning for updates and replacements. At the same time, prices have risen dramatically. Based on data provided to us by the Philadelphia Fire Department, the cost of a pumper increased from 2020 to 2025 by approximately 82% per truck, and the cost of a tiller ladder increased by approximately 67% per truck. These increases equate to millions of dollars that the department needs to maintain frontline readiness, while the cost of doing so rises far faster than available resources.

When emergency equipment becomes harder to replace, public safety is put at risk.

Citizens have only a few short minutes to escape a structure today as fire burns hotter and spreads quicker than it did years ago. The window for safely evacuating your home during a fire has narrowed from approximately 17 minutes in the 1990's to only 3 minutes today. This is mainly due to factors such as the synthetic materials used in building modern homes along with cheap furniture, open-plan layouts with fewer barrier walls, and lithium-battery-powered electronics, all of which increase the rate at which fire spreads. Every second counts when lives are on the line, especially today, with these added factors making it more difficult to arrive on scene quickly and safely. Our members must be able to rely on their most critical piece of equipment so that your loved ones can rely on us.

The city's broader financial responsibilities and strains only make this issue more problematic. Philadelphia is the second-poorest big city in the United States, with a poverty rate that constantly hovers around 20%. Our city also imposes a high tax burden on its citizens, who are trying to manage an affordability crisis. In this environment, it may become easier for the fire department's apparatus needs to be delayed or underfunded. But public safety cannot be treated as optional. Firefighters, Paramedics, and EMTs are the ones Philadelphians call when everything else has failed, whether it is a medical emergency, a household emergency, or a life-threatening fire. They must have reliable, up-to-date apparatus to respond quickly and work effectively and efficiently to protect both the public and our members working to save lives. In closing, delayed investment in fire apparatus due to high costs poses a risk to every citizen and visitor to Philadelphia.