

Date: May 19, 2018

To: Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

From: Kara Afrates

Re: H.B. 575 Volunteer Firefighter/EMS Tax Credit Bill

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Scherer, and members of the House Ways & Means Committee, I am writing today to express my enthusiastic support for H.B. 575. As a daughter of a fallen firefighter and with family continuing in the fire service, I see firsthand how hard volunteer firefighters/EMTs work.

As you may already know, fire and EMS personnel face special dangers in carrying out their duties. Fire fighters can suffer from smoke inhalation, burns, physical injuries caused by falling debris or falling through weakened structures, and may even develop cancer due to their work. Likewise, EMS practitioners are exposed to a wide variety of blood borne pathogens such as HIV, hepatitis, etc., as well as flu viruses, staph, C. diff, etc. Both positions expose workers to horrific situations that often involve witnessing severe injuries and loss of life -- not only to themselves but to victims and bystanders. This can weigh on them mentally.

Because these professions carry special risks that other professions do not, I feel these workers would be well served by a state tax credit. A tax credit would reward those who are willing to take these risks as well as encourage others to join their forces.

Please vote to pass H.B. 575.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kara Afrates