



# PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

O F N E W H A M P S H I R E

Honorable Chairman Creighton  
House Labor, Industrial, and  
Rehabilitative Services Committee  
33 North State Street, Room 307  
Concord, NH 03301

*RE: Testimony in support of HB744, relative to workers' compensation indemnity benefits percentage.*

Dear Chairman Creighton and Members of the Labor, Industrial, and Rehabilitative Services Committee,

My name is Brian Ryll, and I am the President of the Professional Fire Fighters of New Hampshire, representing over 2,000 dedicated fire fighters, paramedics, and emergency medical personnel who put their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe. I am here to express our strong support for HB 744, legislation that proposes increasing the weekly compensation rate for employees with temporary total disabilities from 60% to 66 2/3% of their average weekly wage.

The nature of our work is inherently dangerous. Firefighters are routinely exposed to unpredictable hazards—raging fires, hazardous materials, collapsing structures, and other life-threatening emergencies. This constant exposure to danger takes a toll on your body. A fire fighter will encounter work related injuries throughout their career; it is just a matter of when and how bad. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an estimated 63,175 firefighters were injured in the line of duty in 2023 [1].

An injury that results in a temporary total disability can be devastating. These brave men and women often face long roads to recovery, with mounting medical bills and ongoing expenses, all while coping with the physical and emotional pain of their injuries. Under the current system, these injured workers receive 60% of their average weekly wage as compensation. While this provides some support, it often isn't enough to sustain a household, particularly when considering lost overtime, the high cost of medical care, and the impact on families.

Increasing the compensation rate to 66 2/3% as proposed by HB 744 is a necessary and overdue adjustment. It will provide a more equitable level of financial support, reflecting the true costs and sacrifices associated with the dangerous work we do. This adjustment ensures that injured fire fighters can focus on their recovery without the additional stress of financial insecurity, which can hamper their rehabilitation and delay their return to service.



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Moreover, this bill recognizes and respects the value of the work our first responders do. It sends a clear message that when they put themselves in harm's way, their sacrifices are acknowledged, and their well-being is prioritized. As public servants, we dedicate our lives to protecting the public. It is only fair that, in times of need, we are provided the support necessary to recover and return to the profession we love.

I urge you to support HB 744 and help ensure that our workers' compensation system honors the risks that fire fighters and other public safety workers take every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Ryll  
President  
Professional Fire Fighters of New Hampshire