



Peters Cosponsors Legislation to Establish National Registry for Firefighters Suffering from Cancer

Cancer is a Leading Cause of Deaths for Firefighters

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WASHINGTON, DC – U.S Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) today announced he is cosponsoring bipartisan legislation to establish a national registry that would better monitor cancer diagnoses in firefighters. The *Firefighter Cancer Registry Act* would also improve voluntary data collection to track and respond to firefighters’ unique health care needs. Firefighters are exposed to hazardous toxins and carcinogens in the line of duty and have a higher risk for cancer, which is a leading cause of death for career firefighters. According to the International Association of Fire Fighters, nearly 60% of firefighters will die from cancer.

“Firefighters put their lives on the line every day to help protect our homes and our communities, and in return they deserve to receive the best care possible,” **said Senator Peters, a member of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.** “Creating this voluntary registry is a good first step toward determining the unique risks to firefighters’ health. This information will allow us to research preventive techniques and design better protective equipment for our first responders, as well as develop advanced, effective medical treatments to provide the best care to firefighters diagnosed with cancer.”

“Firefighters are exposed to potentially harmful toxins every day as they work to protect our homes, businesses and communities,” **said Mark Docherty, President of Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union.** “By learning more about the risks firefighters face in the line of duty, we can improve on-the-job safety and help prevent and treat the life-threatening illnesses and health consequences they are more likely to face down the road.”

The *Firefighter Cancer Registry Act* would create a voluntary registry to collect and catalog health data related to the high instances of cancer among firefighters. The registry would include

information such as years of service, number of fire incidents responded to, and any additional occupational risk factors. The data will be made publicly available to researchers to help support groundbreaking research to determine any link between exposure to toxins and cancer, and develop better protective gear and prevention techniques to improve firefighter safety.

According to a 2010 study by the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) firefighters have a 14 percent increased risk of dying from cancer compared to the general population. Firefighters are also much more likely to be diagnosed with unique forms of cancer, such as malignant mesothelioma, a rare cancer caused by asbestos exposure.

This bill is supported by several major fire organizations, including the International Association of Fire Fighters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Congressional Fire Services Institute, and the International Association of Fire Fighters Michigan Chapter.

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