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Testimony to Support House Bill 2031 / Senate Bill 15

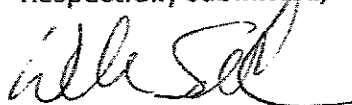
On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 I officially retired from the Olathe Fire Department after 32 years of emergency service. During that time, I held the positions of Firefighter, Apparatus Engineer (Driver), Fire Captain, and Acting Battalion Chief. In 1987 when I was first hired the Olathe Fire Department had 2 Fire Stations, we ran about 2000 calls, and the population was around 35,000 people. We only ran Fire Calls and barely any Medical Calls. Fast forward to 2019 and we currently have 8 fire stations and in 2018, we ran a total of 12,628 calls! 72% of those calls were medical calls, and the population is now around 140,000 people. The Olathe FD is an Accredited Fire Department and through the crediting process the citizens told us that the main thing they want us to do is "RESCUE them". In 1995, we created a Special Operations Group specializing in training and preparing for the worst type of calls that anyone could imagine. HazMat, Rope Rescue, Confined Space, and Building Collapse to name a few. As part of this team I responded to hundreds of specialized calls including the Greensburgh, KS tornado, the Atchison Grain elevator explosion, and in 2005 - I worked on the KS Incident Management Team/Katrina response in Biloxi, MS.

My eyes have seen the worst-case scenarios for so many people, but I feel privileged to be one of those First Responders that has helped solve a "worst day" situation. The gratitude we get from our community is something you cannot buy with any amount of money.

My support for this Bill is because it would give my family, and I, peace of mind if a disease rears it's ugly head in the future. We all know Cancer is one of those things that can present itself many years after first being exposed. I have been in literally thousands of fires or hazardous situations. It would also help the KP&F member who must medically retire because he received a career ending disease.

When our team of Firefighters respond to a "Working Fire" we dedicate one crew to be the RIC Team (Rescue Intervention Crew). This group of Firefighters only job is to be ready outside the structure to go into *RESCUE* mode if one of our brothers or sisters becomes incapacitated or cannot get out in a timely matter. I'm asking **YOU** to be **OUR** Intervention Team and help us get this Bill passed. Thank you for your time,

Respectfully submitted,



William Schneider