



MEMO

To: Members of the Pa House of Representatives

From: Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, PA Municipal League and
PA State Association of Township Commissioners

Geoffery Beauchamp, Esq., General Counsel, Delaware Valley Municipal
Management Association

Ed Troxell, Director of Governmental Affairs, PA State Association of Boroughs

Joe Gerdes, Director of Government Relations, PA State Association of Township
Supervisors

Re: House Bill 432 and House Bill 1459 – Post-traumatic Stress Injury

Date: October 22, 2019

On behalf of our member municipalities, we are writing to provide our position on HB 432 and HB 1459 slated for second consideration this week.

House Bill 432 (PN 2568) – Strongly Opposed / Neutral with Cox amendment A2947

House Bill 432 lowers the bar for first responders in proving a claim for post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) under the Workers' Compensation Law. **Please be aware – this is not a recommendation of the SR 6 Commission Report and it should not be swept along in the effort to support, recruit and retain first responders.**

House Bill 432 will result in a very expensive unfunded mandate on local government. The insurance premiums for Workers' Compensation will increase substantially in order to adequately insure a broad group of employees and circumstances. These new premiums will make the increase experienced following the fire fighter cancer presumption benefit pale by comparison. The practical result will be higher property taxes or service cuts to cover these costs. This will negatively impact the ability of local governments to support their first responders in other ways and negate other SR 6 efforts.

Chairman Cox has filed Amendment 2947; its adoption would bring our position to neutral.

This amendment narrows the impact of the bill by defining in statute the “traumatic events” that can be the basis of a PTSI claim. For example, under the bill as currently written, a person need not actually experience the traumatic event, only hear or read about it.

House Bill 1459 (PN 2569) – Strongly Support

House Bill 1459 *is* an SR 6 Commission Recommendation – Recommendation 22 in fact. This bill will help prevent first responder suicide by developing and funding a statewide protocol to prevent, mitigate and treat mental stress and illness related to that stress. This should be the Commonwealth’s first step in addressing the mental health of first responders and removing the stigma of seeking assistance. We fully support this measure.

In closing, we support efforts to assist first responders with managing stress related to their work protecting all of us. Our Commonwealth can take a great step forward with the enactment of House Bill 1459. House Bill 432, however, will only drive up the cost of providing public safety.

Thank you for your consideration.