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Testimony House Bill 1502

**Baltimore firefighter met with gunshots after stopping to help in car crash Saturday**

**Maryland firefighters shot by man who thought he was stopping break-in**

**The man who fatally shot a Maryland firefighter and critically wounded another said he had thought he was stopping an attempted break-in when he opened fire.**

**A firehouse in Baltimore was hit by stray bullets Tuesday**

**Union officials say 12 off-duty firefighters were shot while attending a country music festival in Las Vegas, including two who were wounded while administering CPR to gunshot victims.**

4 firefighters shot, 2 fatally, in western NY

Gunman who trapped and shot the volunteer firefighters is dead; one of the slain is also a police lieutenant

Firefighters shot at outside firehouse during parking area burglary

Second man arrested after firefighter was shot in leg while responding to a fire, police say

Wisconsin firefighter shot, killed while responding to call

Firefighters help Millbury woman fearful of being shot by boyfriend

Two off-duty Oakland firefighters were shot in San Jose, killing one of them and leading to an arrest, fire officials said Friday.

Second Man Charged In Shooting Of Firefighter In Albany Park

The firefighter was caught in the crossfire of a shootout.

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St. Paul Police: Off-Duty Firefighter Tom Harrigan Shot To Death In His East Side Home

Person arrested in connection with shooting of on-duty Chicago firefighter

I just read 5 of 18 headlines involving violence against firefighters. Some of which are in this state.

I started my career as a volunteer firefighter in 1987 and have been working as a career firefighter for 30 years. There was a time when firefighters were not subject to the violence that occurs regularly today. As firefighters, EMT's and first responders we put our lives on the line every day to help the citizens of our great state and those that pass through it.

We are never off duty. Ask any firefighter or EMT and you will hear countless stories of them getting involved off duty to assist someone in need. Whether it be a heroin overdose in a parking lot, an overturned vehicle, an intoxicated person, mentally unstable person, or simple medical emergency we will stop to offer assistance. We will almost always intervene to assist citizens in need. The duty to act and public expectation for us to do so almost forces us to engage in an incident when we can be of assistance.

Maryland State Police SOP 29-15-007 defines an *Assumed Risk Position* as: *a position of government/public safety/criminal justice employment where, by virtue of the positions duties and responsibilities, the employee voluntarily and knowingly assumes the risks that those duties will either place their lives in imminent danger and/or subject them to be targeted by individuals or entities seeking to do them harm as a result of performing those duties or responsibilities.*

This is essentially the job description of a first responder. And meets by definition a 'good and substantial reason'.

In addition, we operate side by side with our law enforcement partners. Being subjected to the same type of situations. Often times being subpoenaed to testify in court in cases that involve violent crimes. Police officers are afforded the added protection of being able to protect themselves when off duty after standing on a witness stand and testifying against a violent suspect. Stating our name and jurisdiction we work for. We do not get the same privilege. But are expected to do it anyway.

We all have taken an oath to protect and serve and are willing to give our life to do that for you. Many of my peers have done exactly that. We are only asking that we be allowed to protect ourselves, so we can continue to protect you.