



**UNIFORMED
PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT**

**CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE
2014 QUESTIONNAIRE**

Candidate's Name: _____
Office Sought: _____ District: _____
Committee Name: _____
Committee Treasurer: _____
Committee Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone number: _____ Party Affiliation: _____

The International Association of Fire Fighters chartered the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut in 1946. Presently, the U.P.F.F.A. of CT represents more than 60 local unions of the IAFF in Connecticut, more than 4,000 union Fire Fighters. The Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association advocates fire service issues and interests before the Administrative and Legislative branches of Connecticut State Government.

Professional Fire Fighters realize we cannot provide for the safety of our citizens alone. We need strong advocates for our life saving work at all levels of government. We are committed to supporting candidates for office who share our commitment to the Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) needs of the public.

Should you need additional information about the following issues and questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact Paul Rapanault below.

Please return the completed questionnaire no later than **August 21, 2014** to:

U.P.F.F.A. of Connecticut
30 Sherman Street,
West Hartford, CT 06110
Attention: Paul J. Rapanault

Or fax to 860-953-3334

Should you have questions or if you need clarification, please call:

Paul J. Rapanault
Director of Legislative and Political Affairs
Cell: 203-934-0105 or e-mail: paulrap@upffa.org

UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

2014 STATE LEGISLATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate's Name _____ Office Sought _____ District # _____

(Please CIRCLE appropriate answer for ALL 10 QUESTIONS)

1. In 2008, the General Assembly introduced legislation (SB 685 *AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A STATE MUNICIPAL FINANCE ASSISTANCE COMMISSION, 2008 Session*) that would give extraordinary powers to Special Review Boards when impaneled to assist municipalities in distress. This bill legalized the abrogation of collective bargaining agreements and the curtailment of collective bargaining as possible remedies for these situations. Would you;

SPONSOR - SUPPORT - OPPOSE

legislation that permits this type of treatment of workers?

2. In 1975, legislation was passed requiring that disputes between management and Fire Fighters be resolved through mediation, fact finding and binding arbitration. This forward thinking legislation is now being emulated nationally. Unfortunately, the Connecticut Statute has been altered over the years in several significant areas. In 2010 & 2012, proposals were put forth to reduce the Arbitration Panel from three members (*1 Management Advocate, 1 Labor Advocate and 1 Neutral*) to a one (*neutral*) member Panel appointed by the Labor Board, effectively eliminating the equal balance of the current Panel arrangement. Would you;

SUPPORT - OPPOSE

legislation which weakens the current binding arbitration process and/or attempts to implement the 2010/12 proposal?

3. While private pensions are protected from underfunding or poor investing by Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, ERISA, Fire Fighter pensions do not have this kind of protection.

a) Would you;

SPONSOR - SUPPORT - OPPOSE

legislation to create ERISA-like protections and guarantees for municipal and state employee pension systems that would protect Fire Fighter pensions from under funding and fund "raiding"?

b) Would you;

SPONSOR - SUPPORT - OPPOSE

legislation to include Fire Fighter representatives in the decision-making process for investment of pension assets?

4. The State of Connecticut has created a "Hazardous Duty" classification for state employees who receive a pension credit of 2.5% for each year of service. Municipal employees in the Municipal Employees Pension System (MERS) do not. Would you;

SPONSOR - SUPPORT - OPPOSE

legislation to make changes to MERS so as to bring equality to municipal and state employees who work in a hazardous duty classification?

5. Currently, Connecticut Statute vests control of all emergency scenes to the ranking fire department officer on the scene. Would you;

SUPPORT - OPPOSE

changes to the current system?

6. Fire Fighters and Police Officers have had the protections of the Good Samaritan Laws for many years. Would you

SUPPORT - OPPOSE

maintaining the current law?

7. Prior to the 1993 Workers' Compensation 'Reforms', coverage for mental health needs were readily available to workers'. That is no longer the case and aside from fire fighter's witnessing the death of a fellow fire fighter, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is not recognized as a work related condition. This is just plain wrong.

Without fail, fire fighters are on the frontline, the first to respond to a disaster. In addition, fire fighters often can stay on the disaster scene for hours, days or weeks if a lengthy recovery operation is necessary. When the magnitude and scope of trauma is great, the demands on the fire fighter's time, strength and energy is equally great. Oftentimes the physical and emotional demands of rescue and recovery do not allow the fire fighter to attend to his or her own needs. Fire fighters will often take shortcuts with their sleep, their nutrition and connection to their families in the aftermath of disasters. These shortcuts can short-circuit physical and psychological health. Hours and days on the scene of a disaster can take a heavy emotional toll. Unexpectedly gruesome sights, mass casualties or loss of friends or family during a disaster can put even the most senior and seasoned fire fighter at risk for acute stress disorder or PTSD.

Would you;

SUPPORT - OPPOSE

making Post Traumatic Stress Disorder a compensable injury under Workers' Compensation?

8. Breathing apparatus and protective clothing protects Fire Fighters from some hazardous materials in a toxic atmosphere, but not all. Toxic chemicals can leach through "protective gear" and be absorbed into the skin, the human body's largest organ. Because of this exposure, Fire Fighters are shown to be vulnerable to certain types of cancer. In 2010, the General Assembly passed legislation that clarified the Workers' Compensation statutes regarding certain cancers. This was an improvement over existing law. In the future, would you;

SPONSOR - SUPPORT - OPPOSE

legislation that would create a rebuttable **presumption** for a Fire Fighter and Police Officer who contract certain types of cancer?

9. The **American Arbitration Association (AAA)** is a private enterprise in the business of arbitration, and one of several arbitration organizations that administers arbitration proceedings. The AAA also administers mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution.

Several municipalities have been pushing for a change in their employee collective bargaining agreements that would utilize **AAA** instead of the **Connecticut State Board of Mediation and Arbitration**. Utilizing AAA's services for arbitration is prohibitively more expensive than the \$25 filing fee charged by the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration and is seen by many IAFF local unions as management's mechanism to frustrate grievance filings by dramatically increasing the costs.

Would you;

SUPPORT - OPPOSE

protecting local union's right to arbitration by the Connecticut State Board of Mediation and Arbitration?

10. During the 2010 Session of the General Assembly, the Democratic Majority empanelled the "M.O.R.E. Commission" to investigate and bring forth as legislative proposals ideas to save the State of Connecticut money. Several of the proposals resulting from the Commission hearings involved Regionalization and what can best be described as sharing of services. Among these included discussion of "Master Contracts" (*one contract for all fire fighters regardless of department location and conditions*) for Connecticut's fire departments.

(a) Would you oppose the regional approach to public safety, i.e., fire fighting and police?

YES – NO

If yes, please expand on this answer below.

(b) Would you look to place all professional fire fighters and/or police officers under one uniform statewide or regional contract?

YES – NO

Again, if yes, please expand on your answer below.

Use additional pages if necessary.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ANSWERS.