



UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

AFFILIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

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The Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association (UPFFA) is a statewide labor organization which represents over 3000 career firefighters and emergency service personnel throughout the state of Connecticut.

Although the UPFFA recognizes the positive intent of creating a recruitment process for women which focuses on the key ideals of equity, access, inclusion, and opportunity, we strongly **oppose proposed House Bill 5501, An Act Concerning Alternative Physical Ability Testing Requirements for Female Candidates for Firefighter Positions.**

The proposal of the bill has opened a serious and necessary conversation about not just entry-level requirements but also the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce which represents the communities we are sworn to protect. Some of the most immediate concerns of our Connecticut CPAT facility include the difficulty of access via public transportation, the limited testing window, and the lack of opportunities for training and mentoring programs for prospective candidates. By creating CPAT facilities which are easily accessible and available for training throughout the year, we will put more applicants in a position to be successful.

Currently, the Connecticut Fire Service relies on the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) in order to identify a standard level of individual physical fitness that the duties of firefighter would be required to perform at any given time. The CPAT process is a nationally accepted and validated assessment tool created by a consensus panel of firefighter professionals from the International Association of FireFighters (IAFF) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) that has been in use since 1997. This panel reviewed several jurisdictions across the country and identified consistencies in protective clothing, required firefighting tools and equipment, and common/routine tasks that are completed at the scene of a fire emergency. These consistencies include the weight of required protective clothing, size and weight of tools and equipment, and simulated fire scene tasks.

The UPFFA believes the best path forward is to create a working group of legislators, municipal leaders and firefighters to review the issue. We look forward to working with key stakeholders and utilizing our member's personal experiences to improve the entry process for under-represented groups in the fire service including women and people of color.

Peter Brown

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