



Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Local 1664
International Association of Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO, CLC
932 Hungerford Drive Suite 33A
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FAVORABLE TESTIMONY

Montgomery County Expedited Bill 32-25

Employees' Retirement System – Survivor Benefits – Death During Line of Duty (HERO Act)

On behalf of the members of the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association - IAFF Local 1664, it is a privilege to provide this testimony in strong and unequivocal support of Expedited Bill 32-25, the HERO Act.

This legislation is not simply a policy update—it is a moral responsibility. Expedited Bill 32-25 strengthens existing law by increasing survivor benefits for Group G fire fighters and eliminating the unnecessary and painful delays that families currently face when a loved one is killed in the line of duty. These changes address shortcomings that have, unnecessarily, placed additional burdens on families at the very moment they are least able to bear them.

Every day, Montgomery County fire fighters walk into burning buildings, respond to violent or unpredictable emergencies, and willingly face dangers most people will never encounter. They do this without hesitation and without knowing whether they will return home at the end of their shift. These risks are not abstract—they are real, constant, and accepted as part of their service to the community.

When a fire fighter is killed in the line of duty, their family's world collapses in an instant. A spouse loses their partner. Children lose the parent they depended on for comfort, guidance, and stability. And at a time defined by heartbreak and shock, these families should not be forced to navigate administrative delays or worry about whether they will have the financial means to remain in their home, support their children, or maintain any sense of normalcy.

Yet under current law, that is exactly the hardship many families endure. The HERO Act changes this. It ensures that survivor benefits reflect the true sacrifice of our members and that families receive timely, dependable support—not months later, but when they need it most.

Expedited Bill 32-25 makes our system more compassionate and more aligned with the values Montgomery County holds for its public servants. It is a promise that if a fire fighter gives everything in service to this community, the County will stand firmly with their family in the darkest moments imaginable.

Our members respond to every call with courage, professionalism, and an unwavering commitment to protecting others. They deserve to know that if tragedy strikes, their loved ones will not be left alone to struggle through grief, uncertainty, and financial instability.

For these reasons, our members strongly urge the Council to pass Expedited Bill 32-25 without hesitation.

Submitted by: Jeffrey Buddle, President, IAFF Local 1664