



**HOWARD COUNTY PROFESSIONAL  
FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION  
I.A.F.F. LOCAL 2000**

5397 TWIN KNOLLS ROAD • SUITE 16 • COLUMBIA, MD 21045

September 18, 2017

Chairman Jon Weinstein  
Howard County Council  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

CB64-2017

Good evening Chairman Weinstein, members of the county council, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you this evening. My name is Bruce Bennett, I reside at 920 Clearview Road, Union Bridge, Maryland 21791. I currently serve as the Vice-President of the Howard County Professional Fire Fighters, IAFF Local 2000, and have served as the lead negotiator for the last three contracts.

I am here tonight to provide testimony in support of Council Bill 64, the legislation required to enact our new collective bargaining agreement.

In these negotiations, as we have in recent years, we recognized the uncertain nature of the department's fiscal position. Because of this, the cost of living adjustments in this agreement are in line with those of other county agencies. However, with the permission of the county, we laid out our adjustments differently to allow for some welcomed relief to the hard-working paramedics within our ranks. As a result, paramedics assigned to positions which routinely ride the ambulance will receive additional compensation.

As we all watched the historic flood unfold in Ellicott City last July, our members, and particularly those trained in Special Operations, spent hundreds of hours shoring up buildings, searching, tagging, and removing numerous submerged vehicles, and ensuring the safety of the affected residents and business owners while they came in to retrieve personal belongings. The county was gracious enough to recognize the hard work and dedication of these Special Operations Team members, by permitting the addition of their current premium toward the retirement and benefit calculation.

In addition, a reallocation of specialty pays within the Fire Marshal's office was undertaken. With this change, all members assigned to the Fire Marshal's office will now receive a \$1,000 specialty pay, with that pay also being counted toward the retirement and benefit calculation.

The most time-consuming portion of negotiations was the work to develop a 12-hour day schedule. It took us several weeks to reach a consensus on this topic. This schedule was designed specifically to provide additional services during the peak call-volume hours. While this new schedule will only impact a small number of members, its addition does represent a significant departure from our culture and level of comfort.

Not to be lost in these more significant changes or additions, there are some other minor changes to the contract in regard to member-contributed Union Leave, and a direct leave contribution program for our members in need.

We respectfully request a favorable vote on Council Bill 64.

In closing, we recognize that this will be the last time we come before the present members of the council seeking support for a new collective bargaining agreement. We wish to thank each of you for the support you have shown us over the last eleven (11) years.

If there are any questions you may have regarding this agreement, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bruce E. Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce E. Bennett, Vice-President  
IAFF Local 2000