State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
State House, Room 224
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
401-222-2080

Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor

June 20, 2012

TO THE HONORABLE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 14, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Section 43-1-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I transmit, with my disapproval, 2012-S 2427, "An Act Relating to Health and Safety – The Firefighter Cancer Wellness Act."

State law requires the Department of Health to maintain within its cancer registry the incidence of cancer and the increase in survival rates due to early detection among professional and volunteer firefighters, and to report that information annually to the state fire marshal. This bill would extend the requirement to Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

It is possible that tracking firefighter and EMT cancer incidents over time could prove to be a useful tool for policymakers and administrators concerned with risk reduction for these workers and volunteers, but only if data emerged that showed Rhode Island to be a statistically significant cancer-outlier compared to the rest of the country. Given our relatively small population and therefore sample size, we are unlikely to obtain new findings that would support policy changes.

Cancer causes and correlations are already sufficiently well-known to provide firefighters and EMTs with best practices to reduce cancer risk, including the use of respirators and other protective gear, as well as properly cleaning up both one's person and clothing after potential exposure to carcinogens and other toxins. Adding yet another report to collect unessential data burdens government and takes away resources from other areas with greater need.

For these reasons, I disapprove of this legislation and respectfully urge your support of this veto.

Sincerely,

Lincoln D. Chafee