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## Fire Chiefs Association

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### The House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee Hearing

#### House Bill 1819

Testimony – February 18, 2020

James Jay Delaney, Fire Chief, EMC, EMT/P

**Chairman Barrar, Democratic Chair Chris Sainato and members of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss House Bill 1819.**

**I am the Fire Chief for the City of Wilkes-Barre. I have been honored to serve the city in this role for over 14 years and a total of 39 years in Emergency Services. I am also the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Wilkes-Barre and a certified paramedic. In addition, I am the President of the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs Association representing career and combination Fire Chiefs from across the Commonwealth.**

**From January 23, 2017 to November 30, 2018 I had the honor to serve on the Senate Resolution 6 Committee. During this nearly two years the 39-member commission was made up of major Fire & EMS organizations, elected officials and leaders throughout the Commonwealth. During this time the committee came up with 92 recommendations that were triaged down to the final 27 recommendations. Six sub committees were formed. Most of my work was done with the Government Support Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Charles McGarvey, Lower Merion Township Fire Department.**

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Altoona  
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Beaver Falls  
Bradford  
Butler Township  
Chambersburg  
Chester  
Dormont  
Dunmore  
Easton  
Emmaus  
Erie  
Franklin  
Fort Indiantown Gap  
Hanover/Penn  
Township  
Harrisburg  
Harrisburg Airport  
Hazelton  
Johnstown  
Lancaster  
Lebanon  
Lehigh Valley  
Airport  
Lewisburg  
Lower Merion  
McKeesport  
Manheim Township  
Meadville  
Norristown  
Oil City  
Pittston City  
Plains Township  
Reading  
Scranton  
Spring Township  
Whitehall Township  
Wilkes Barre  
Williamsport  
Wilson Borough  
York Area United  
York City

**During our work and investigation, we felt a need to update the model for the State Fire Commissioners Office, namely creating a Fire Commission.**

**SR 6, Recommendation 5 clearly states the following:**

**The OSFC would be clearly designated as the “lead agency” for fire service in the Commonwealth.**

**A new State Fire Commission should be created.**

**The State Fire Commission would set minimum standards to be followed by all companies/departments in the Commonwealth.**

**The OSFC would be responsible for grant administration.**

**The OSFC would be responsible for the State Fire Academy.**

**Data Collection and analysis of the statewide fire experience and system conditions must be collected on an ongoing basis.**

**Fire Prevention measures and improvements.**

**Administer Fireman’s Relief Funds**

**Provide Technical Assistance directly to Fire Departments.**

**Be authorized to take correct deficiencies related to statewide minimum Standard of Cover.**

**House Bill 1819 is an excellent start to follow the SR 6, Recommendation 5. We are thankful to Representative Davis and all the HB 1819 co-sponsors to date. We would respectfully request the following considerations to HB 1819:**

**Remove State Fire Chief and keep the position State Fire Commissioner.**

**The creation of an independent Fire Commission is directly supported by SR 6, Recommendation 5 and supported by the PCFCA.**

**The independent Fire Commission should only have a membership supported by Fire & EMS members. Private industry representation should not be part of the independent Fire Commission.**

**The creation of a Fire Safety Advisory Committee should have greater representation of combination fire departments. Both career and volunteer fire fighters would be part of the make up of the proposed Fire Safety Advisory Committee. Fifty percent of the**

**membership from the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs Association are combination fire departments. The current trend in the fire service is combination fire departments as the demand for services increases. We propose adding one or two members from combination fire departments to the Advisory Committee.**

**This concludes my testimony today. I am grateful to the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee for the opportunity to add my voice and that of the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs Association membership.**

**Thank you.**