



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

April 2, 2024

The Honorable Steven Casey
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong opposition to House Bill 7464 relating to towns and cities -- relief of injured and deceased firefighters and police officers.

If passed, this act would extend injured-on-duty (IOD) benefits to police officers and firefighters that suffer from diagnosed post-traumatic stress injuries. Additionally, this act would allow police officers and firefighters that are unable to perform their duties caused post-traumatic stress injury to be entitled to receive an accidental disability retirement allowance as well as IOD benefits.

The city of Providence is facing a significant pensions liability that threatens not only the city but the entire state of Rhode Island. Currently, the city pension obligation is only 25% funded, with a total liability of \$1.2 billion. As Mayor, I am committed to finding a long-term solution to fixing the pension problem, however, legislation like House Bill 7464 will make that extremely difficult and set Providence back decades as we continue to make tough choices surrounding the city's finances.

I have the utmost respect for the people that serve in our police and fire departments and look forward to working with them on many issues that affect Providence; however, House Bill 7464 goes too far, and I strongly urge the committee to vote no.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brett P. Smiley".

Mayor Brett P. Smiley

City of Providence