

Rep. Dacia Grayber testimony before HBL HB 4113:

Good afternoon Chair Holvey and committee members. For the record, my name is Dacia Grayber, and I am proudly the State Representative for HD 35, Tigard and SW Portland. Thank you so much for the opportunity to bring HB 4113 before you. I'm not only the Chief sponsor of this policy, I'm also a 22-year veteran of the fire service, still serving my community full-time when we are not physically in session.

One of the many reasons I ran for office was to care for those who care for us. This has only been amplified by the funerals I have attended of firefighter deaths due to cancer—including two in the past 6 months.

The legislation I bring forward to discuss today is a modest build upon the existing legislation. When passed in 2009, Oregon's cancer presumption, while limited in scope, was an essential step in protecting people who run in, when everyone else runs away.

Firefighting is one of the very few jobs where we don't have a choice of what we're exposed to, or which dangers we decide to encounter. When our community calls on us, we are there. Regardless of the danger, we go. And despite knowing that we could encounter life-threatening conditions where we may not go home, we never turn away. It's a duty and commitment that every firefighter holds at their very core. The danger lurks long after the calls end, however. Despite the headlines about burn over and structural collapse and entrapment, it's actually cancer that is the number one killer of firefighters, per the CDC.

Expanding our cancer presumption is a moral policy imperative. You are going to hear much ado about the science in opposing testimony, but I would implore you to consider that these same studies have also been quoted by supporting testimony for this legislation.

Bladder cancer is occurring with increasing frequency and in younger firefighters across the nation. 42 states in this nation recognize bladder cancer as a threat to their firefighters and address presumptive bladder coverage; Oregon is one of only 8 that do not. This matters. This is a workforce issue. Oregon is struggling to hire and retain firefighters, especially in contrast to neighboring states. While the

presumptive coverage varies state to state, every state bordering Oregon has bladder cancer coverage. This seems coverage will make a huge impact for the life and family of a firefighter that may have to face this cancer.

*(I would also like to direct your attention to a written report I have submitted on OLIS about firefighters and bladder cancer).*

Regarding reproductive cancers: I am one out of only 276 professional female firefighters currently working in the entire state of Oregon. And while we're equal on the line, and equal in what we encounter and are exposed to, if one of my male colleagues contracts a reproductive cancer as a result of their job exposure, that cancer is covered. If I were to contract a gynecologic or reproductive cancer, currently, I am not. This is a rudimentary fairness issue. As Oregon strives for equity and representation in the fire service—including funding a groundbreaking apprenticeship program to bring more women to the profession—we absolutely need to correct this fundamental disparity in coverage. It's time to walk the talk.

I am proud to share this is a bipartisan, bicameral policy, with 35 sponsors, and more expressing an interest in signing on. To our partners in workers' compensation who our state's firefighters look to and count on to care for us in our greatest hour of need—your firefighter's lives and wellness hang in the balance. I speak from personal experience, as the wife of a firefighter cancer survivor—facing cancer is one of the most trying and traumatic experiences a firefighter and their family may face as a result of their job. Please don't forget the very human face of the heroes under the helmet. This is good policy, and a necessary and meaningful step of coverage to care for those who, without question or hesitation, show up time and again to care for our State.

*(In OLIS there are several other firefighter testimonies in support of this legislation that I would encourage you to read)*

Thank you so much for this opportunity to bring HB 4113 before you for consideration. I humbly ask for your yes vote.