



# OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters  
AFL-CIO CLC

House Committee on Emergency Management,  
General Government and Veterans

Chair Representative Dacia Grayber  
Vice Chair Rick Lewis  
Vice Chair Thuy Tran

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Tran and Lewis,

For the record my name is Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council and we represent 3700 career fire fighters and paramedics throughout the great State of Oregon.

I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 3426. The Behavioral Health Access Bill or 9-8-8 addition of a fire fighter first responder option.

We have known intuitively for years that suicide and those who are in mental crisis need immediate assistance and this Bill will create an option for our profession to access industry specific mental health professionals to help us in crisis. We also know that fire fighters, EMT's and paramedics need clinicians who have specific skill sets to deal with our line of work. This Bill speaks to that subset of clinicians who have taken the requisite training and clinical mental health expertise in our field.

Our support of this Bill is making access to appropriate clinical help in a timely manner to stabilize mental health crisis and prevent any more suicides of fire fighters and first responders.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important immediate access to mental health care for Oregon's fire fighters and first responders.

I am willing to answer any questions of the committee.

Regards

*Karl Koenig* s/s

Karl Koenig  
President  
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council