

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF WESTERLY
OPPOSING SENATE BILL 2023-0137 AND HOUSE BILL 2023-H 5201
RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES - RELIEF OF INJURED AND DECEASED FIRE
FIGHTERS AND POLICE OFFICERS PRESUMPTION FOR HEART DISEASE AND
HYPERTENSION

WHEREAS, Legislation has passed the General Assembly that would expand the number of ways a municipal employee can retire with "injured on duty" status without the millions of dollars in financial support it will take to fund them; and

WHEREAS, Hypertension is one of the most prevalent pathologies in America affecting approximately one in three US adults. Analyses have also identified a linear relationship between elevated blood pressure and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease which increases substantially with age; and

WHEREAS, Certain individuals have a higher genetic predisposition to hypertension and heart disease irrespective of a person's job or position which increases the likelihood that they will develop either condition over time; and

WHEREAS, This legislation does not consider the full financial impact, nor does it consider the duration of employment, any secondary employment or the timing of a "heat injury or stroke incident"; and

WHEREAS, Creating safeguards ensures that the system, and those responsible for administering it, are not manipulated to the benefit of someone potentially looking to abuse the system. By requiring "clear and convincing evidence," it limits the ability of the State's retirement board of the disability subcommittee to refute the evidence that is presented; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island cities and towns have advocated for meaningful reform of the injured on duty system and disability pensions with no meaningful progress.

RESOLVED that we, the Town Council of the Town of Westerly, do hereby oppose Senate Bill 2023-0137 and House Bill 2023-H 5201 and direct that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Governor of Rhode Island and urge him to veto this legislation.

FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to every Rhode Island municipality requesting their support in opposition to this legislation.

ADOPTED: July 24, 2023

ATTEST:

Mary L. LeBlanc, MMC

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Council Clerk

