

# Washington State Council of Fire Fighters

## TALKING POINTS FOR 2020 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

### **Protecting Employee Information from Public Disclosure (HB1888)**

- Our state has robust public disclosure laws; and that's a good thing, but it exposes the personal and financial information of public workers to scam artists.
- Current law already exempts some personal information from public disclosure, including home addresses, Social Security numbers, and personal phone numbers.
- HB 1888 takes common sense steps to safeguard personal data—like birthdays and data that reveal addresses—to protect public workers' safety and guard against identity theft and fraud.
- Protects firefighters from bad actors trying to track down our personal information and contact us at home.
- Please support improved privacy protections for public employees.

### **Retirement Benefits for Paramedics Working for a Public Hospital (HB2902 SB6616)**

- Evergreen Hospital provided ALS service to North King County from 1977 to 2003. The paramedics working for Evergreen were improperly excluded from the public pension system.
- There are approximately 45 paramedics who worked in this system and did not receive any pension benefits until 2003.
- King County had agreed to pay both employer and employee contributions, but their legal counsel advised them to wait for the legislature to act.
- There would be no increase to pension rates.

### **Permanent Fire Benefit Charge Option (SB 6415)**

- A Fire Benefit Charge may be used by Fire Protection Districts as an alternative to sole reliance on assessed valuation for property taxes as a source of funding.
- Election costs divert scarce resources away from the direct delivery of fire and emergency medical services.
- Fire Districts are authorized to implement a Fire Benefit Charge with a 60% approval of the electorate.
- A permanent Fire Benefit Charge Option will create a more stable source of funding allowing Fire Protection Districts to focus on their primary mission of life safety.

### **Panhandling Exemption for Fill the Boot (HB2911)**

- For more than 65 years, firefighters have been working hard for MDA, filling the boot on behalf of this great charity.
- Local governments have passed ordinances against aggressive or nuisance panhandling. This has restricted previously successful Fill-the-Boot campaigns in those localities and has dwindled the money raised for the children suffering from muscular dystrophy.
- Public safety is not a concern with Fill-the-Boot; neither is firefighter safety.
- A statewide exemption for firefighters or first responders engaging in these activities would allow our members to successfully fundraise on behalf of the MDA.