



**SENATE BILL 408: AN ACT CONCERNING LIQUOR PERMITS, FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION INSPECTIONS, THE REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION AND VARIOUS REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO JUICE BARS**

**SENATE BILL 410: AN ACT CONCERNING FIREFIGHTER CANCER**

**HOUSE BILL 5453: AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY REGARDING STATE-WIDE ESSENTIAL WORKER AND FIRST RESPONDER JOB CLASSIFICATIONS**

**Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services**

**Public Safety and Security Committee**

**March 12, 2026**

Senator Gaston, Representative Boyd, Senator Cicarella, Representative Howard, and distinguished Public Safety and Security Committee members. I am Michelle Gilman, Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on several bills that are on today's agenda.

**Senate Bill 408: An Act Concerning Liquor Permits, Fire Safety and Prevention Inspections, The Registration of Certain Information and Various Requirements Relating to Juice Bars.**

**Section 2** of the bill revises the state's fire safety and fire prevention inspection statute. Under the bill, local fire marshals must continue inspecting all occupancies subject to the Fire Safety Code and State Fire Prevention Code, but the bill introduces a change that allows these inspections to be carried out not only by the local fire marshal, but also by a sworn member of the local fire department or a "qualified third party" designated by the fire marshal. Also, under the bill, the standard inspection frequency for public service buildings and regulated occupancies changes from once per year to once every two calendar years, unless the State Fire Marshal mandates a different schedule.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has concerns with Section 2 as it explicitly authorizes sworn members of the local fire department and qualified third-party inspectors – individuals who are not necessarily certified fire service code officials – to perform fire safety and prevention inspections when designated by the local fire marshal.

Fire code inspections require specialized training in fire behavior, operational response, code application, and enforcement. These are skills uniquely held by certified fire service code



officials working within the fire service. Allowing third-party inspectors and non-certified sworn fire department members may create inconsistency in inspection quality, as the bill does not define uniform certification, experience, or training requirements for these third parties. Since fire inspection findings directly affect life safety, occupancy, and enforcement actions, reliance on non-fire-service third parties could reduce public confidence and complicate compliance. For these reasons, **we oppose section 2 of the bill.**

For **Section 3** of the bill, we refer the Committee to State Fire Marshal, Lauri Volkert's [testimony](#) in support of House Bill 5161, which is regarding the same topic.

### **Senate Bill 410: An Act Concerning Firefighter Cancer.**

**Section 5** of the bill requires the State Fire Marshal to create a one-year pilot program to reimburse firefighters for cancer screenings. We fully recognize and support the intent of this initiative, and we share the Legislature's commitment to addressing firefighter cancer.

However, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is not equipped to administer this pilot. The responsibilities outlined in Section 5, including identifying qualifying screenings, consulting with medical nonprofits, operating a reimbursement program, and evaluating outcomes, lie outside DAS/OSFM's expertise and capacity. The office does not have personnel with medical, public health, or health program administration experience, nor the staffing needed to manage individual reimbursements or municipal applications, and these resources are not included in the Governor's FY 27 budget adjustment. For these reasons, **we oppose Section 5 of the bill.**

### **House Bill 5453: An Act Requiring a Study Regarding State-Wide Essential Worker and First Responder Job Classifications.**

The bill requires the Commissioner of DAS, in consultation with DESPP and DOL, to study whether a state-wide "essential worker" or "first responder" job classification should be established, and, if so, to evaluate effects on job duties, employee benefits, definitions, and whether telecommunicators and public works employees should be included.

DAS appreciates the intent of the bill; however, we respectfully offer the following concerns.

As outlined in [Governor Malloy's Executive Order No. 65](#), state agencies already have the authority to determine which state employee job functions are essential or nonessential during emergencies, using terminology and criteria that apply to their specific operations. These determinations are made on a case-by-case basis by each agency head. A single, central statewide classification would therefore work against the flexible framework that already exists and has proven effective.



Also, DAS develops job classifications that belong to specific occupations and career series, reflecting the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications required for the position or group of positions that share the same general characteristics. Essential vs. nonessential status is not itself a job class; it is an *operational designation* made by agencies during emergencies or continuity of operations planning.

Creating a formal statewide job class titled “essential worker” or “first responder” would not align with the established classification structure and could introduce confusion or unintended consequences in compensation, benefits, collective bargaining expectations, or statutory obligations. For these reasons, **we oppose House Bill 5453.**