

## Group 2 Legislation

### **HB2461/ (HD1690) An Act relative to municipal Building Officials**

The Massachusetts Federation of Building Officials needs your help. House bill 2461 is an effort to move our retirement from Group 1 to Group 2. The bill is currently in committee. The bill needs to move “Out of Committee” before the June 30, 2024, the end of the legislative session.

Please call as many of the PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE MEMBER listed in the spread sheet and your local Representative/Senator asking them to help push it as well. The more calls each of the Committee Members receives requesting that it move “out of Committee” they will request the respective Chair of the Committee to move it out of Committee.

When I spoke with my local State Representative on the Committee, I mentioned the following information along with some personal experiences which he stated were very helpful and emphasized “especially the personal experiences” ....

These are just my comments that I shared. I apologize in advance, but this is what I did and it is not perfect- I am sharing only for the purposes of helping you to develop and inspire your own comments-

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING WITH THIS TO HELP ADVANCE THIS CAUSE AND OUR PROFESSION!** - *I promise it will be easy, especially once you make your first call. If you cannot reach the Rep. or Senator ask for the Chief of Staff. You can also email but I think actually hearing your own experiences is very helpful!*- Thank you- Kathy Nugent

- There are approximately 600 employed building officials across the Commonwealth which is a small number in the overall impact is relatively small compared to other entities, police, fire, correctional officers, etc.
- We determined that it was not possible to perform a cost analysis of the cost relative to this act due to the uniqueness of each of the 351 municipalities. Each municipality has its own pay scales, the variety of ages and length of services of the Inspectors plus the numerous retirement boards involved. We did previously perform a sampling and found that many of the building officials, perhaps due to age and years of service would not have a huge impact to the retirement system. We hope this will help to create an incentive to have people enter and stay in the profession. (There are some studies that the average building officials are in their mid-50's and need to attract younger people)

- The construction industry is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States and we as building officials are navigating those sites daily and often alone. *(I gave the example of one of our fellow building officials who a few years ago was performing foundation inspections on a large subdivision during the Winter all by himself. He tripped on a piece of metal strapping which was frozen in the ground and fell causing a blow to his head and was knocked unconscious. Thankfully he awoke and crawled for help from a passing vehicle. He suffered a career ending debilitating concussion.)*
- We have all had an accident or two which you can also elaborate on OR even incidents where you felt your safety was compromised.
- Building Officials are responsible for many aspects of enforcement, but it is enforcing the building code and zoning violations which are often very personal to the offender and can bring out the worst of tempers and violent actions. Please share any experiences you may have encountered.
- I spoke to testifying in court and grand juries where the offenders were found guilty, and one person sentenced to jail time. Retaliation is always a possibility.
- We are called by Fire/Police to respond to fires, structural collapses, vehicles hitting buildings, etc. to assess the structural integrity and take the required action such as removing the occupancy of a building, etc. *(We have all heard while watching the news the quote “the BUILDING INSPECTOR has been called to the scene”.* Once again, we are often navigating what can be a very dangerous site. Even calls to abandoned buildings or investigating complaints. – there are endless examples of structures where illegal activities are taking place...meth labs, grow houses, gambling, drug dealing, crimes and sometimes just creepy, sick people.
- In the time of natural disasters...hurricanes, floods, tornados, earthquakes, etc. Most or all of us have received training where we must make the determination if the structure is habitable and other required assessments. In some cases, the State Building Inspectors who are already in Group 2 may assist. Additionally, many or most of the wiring inspectors who work generally under the Inspector of Buildings and/or Building Commissioners are also in Group 2.....
- If they have any other questions, please reach out to one of the MFBO officers and we will be more than glad to assist in addressing any questions they may have.