

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5567

As Reported By House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to emergency medical service district volunteer benefits.

Brief Description: Allowing benefits for emergency medical service district volunteers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations
(originally sponsored by Senators Barr, Owen and Erwin).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Local Government, March 25, 1993, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives H. Myers, Chair; Bray, Vice Chair; Edmondson, Ranking Minority Member; Reams, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dunshee; R. Fisher; Horn; Rayburn; Romero; Van Luven; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background:

A. Volunteer fire fighters' relief and pension benefits.

The state has established a volunteer fire fighters' relief and pension trust fund to finance death and disability benefits and retirement benefits provided for volunteer fire fighters.

Every local government that has volunteer fire fighters must enroll its volunteer fire fighters in the death and disability benefits portion of the state program and make payments to the state fund to finance a portion of the costs of this program. Every local government that has volunteer fire fighters may enroll its volunteer fire fighters in the retirement benefits portion of the state program, and if its volunteers are enrolled, must make payments to the state fund to finance a portion of the costs of this program.

Other moneys, in addition to the periodic payments by local governments, are placed into the trust fund, including 40 percent of the receipts from the state excise taxes on fire insurance premiums.

A board of trustees is created in every local government that has a volunteer fire department to administer the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension Program for its volunteers.

B. Emergency medical service districts.

A county may create an emergency medical service district in all of the unincorporated area of the county or one or more emergency medical service districts throughout all or part of the unincorporated area of the county. The members of the county legislative authority serve in an ex officio capacity as the governing body of an emergency medical service district. Emergency medical service districts provide emergency medical services and finance these services by imposing voter approved regular property taxes.

Emergency medical service districts may use volunteers to provide emergency medical services.

Summary of Amended Bill: Emergency workers of an emergency medical service district who are not full-time employees become eligible for benefits under the state Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Retirement Program.

A board of trustees is created in each emergency medical service district to administer the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Retirement Program for its emergency workers. The board consists of three members of the county legislative authority or their designees, the county auditor or the auditor's designee, the head of the emergency medical service district, and one "emergency worker" of the emergency medical service district who is elected by the "emergency workers" of the emergency medical service district.

The State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters sets the amount that emergency medical service districts must pay to the volunteer fire fighter's relief and pension fund for purposes of the relief and pension program.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Membership on a local board of trustees is changed to include the county auditor instead of the county clerk, or the auditor's designee, and an emergency worker instead of a "member" of the emergency medical service district.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will make it easier to recruit and retain volunteers. There is no cost to the state or local governments. Only a few districts have volunteers that are not already volunteer fire fighters.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Scott Barr, prime sponsor; Tom McDowell, North County Emergency Medical Service District; and Joe Faubion, Executive Secretary, State Board of Volunteer Fire Fighters.