

HCS HB 300 -- FIRE PROTECTION

SPONSOR: Bruns

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on General Laws by a vote of 8 to 0.

This substitute establishes the Volunteer Firefighter Job Protection Act which prohibits public and private employers from terminating an employee who becomes a volunteer firefighter or who is absent from or late to work due to his or her service as a volunteer firefighter. If an employee is absent from or late to work due to his or her service as a volunteer firefighter, the employee may lose pay and may be required to provide a written verification from the firefighter supervisor as to the time and date of the emergency. The volunteer firefighter must make a reasonable effort to notify his or her employer that he or she may be absent from or late to work due to an emergency.

Currently, all fire protection districts, fire departments, and volunteer fire protection associations must file the name and address of the district, department, or association with the State Fire Marshal by October 13 of each year. Beginning January 1, 2008, the substitute requires the district, department, or association to complete and file the fire department registration form provided by the State Fire Marshal by March 1 of each year. The State Fire Marshal may conduct periodic reviews of the information provided on the registration forms.

Currently, a volunteer fire protection association may identify its boundaries and file this information with its county's administrative body. The substitute requires that all associations file this information and prohibits an association's boundaries from encroaching upon or including any portion of another fire department's legally established boundaries.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will allow assignation of identification numbers for registered fire departments. The identification numbers will allow fire departments to more easily apply for federal and state grants and alleviate the problem of private fire departments establishing services in other fire districts. The bill also protects the jobs of volunteer firefighters who may be tardy to their full-time employment due to emergency response duties.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Bruns; Division of

Fire Safety, Department of Public Safety; and Missouri Fire Service Alliance.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.