

HB 300 -- Fire Protection

Sponsor: Bruns

This bill 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. A volunteer firefighter who is terminated in violation of this provision may bring a civil action within one year against his or her employer seeking reinstatement of his or her position, benefits, seniority, and back wages. If the employee prevails in the civil action, he or she is entitled to receive reasonable attorney fees and other costs associated with the civil action.

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 bill 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 bill 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.