

HCS SB 739 -- FIRE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

SPONSOR: Lembke (Pratt)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Public Safety by a vote of 11 to 1.

Currently, upon approval of the board of aldermen, a fire department employee is not required to live within the fire department's geographical boundaries if the only public school district in the area has been unaccredited or provisionally accredited in the last five years of the person's employment, and any fire department employee who lives outside the city limits of the City of St. Louis must forfeit 1% of his or her salary to offset any lost revenue for the city unless voters of the city vote to prevent the enforcement of the 1% forfeiture.

This substitute removes the provision regarding the salary forfeiture and the required approval of the board of alderman regarding residency. The substitute specifies that any employee who has worked seven years for a fire department cannot be required to comply with the residency requirement but must reside within a one-hour response time if the only school district in the area is or has been unaccredited or provisionally accredited in the last five years of the person's employment.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill is a fair compromise which has gained support.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Lembke; Chris Molitor, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 73; and Missouri State Council of Fire Fighters.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that this issue concerns more than just the fire fighters of the City of St. Louis. There are approximately 6,000 city employees who have a residency requirement imposed on them. The city would need to amend its charter to accomplish this change.

Testifying against the bill was Mayor's Office, City of St. Louis.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say it will lead to racial inequality for the city fire department.

Testifying on the bill was Abram Pruitt, Jr., Fire Fighters Institute for Racial Equality.