

SS SB 45 -- FIREFIGHTERS

SPONSOR: Hough (Wiemann)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill allows for the creation of a Voluntary Firefighter Cancer Benefits Pool by three or more political subdivisions. The bill specifies that, any political subdivision may make contributions to a Voluntary Firefighter Cancer Benefits Pool. The board of trustees of any pool created for the purposes of this bill is subject to the Sunshine Law. The Pool is allowed to make payments to covered individuals based upon the type of cancer with which the covered individual was diagnosed.

Benefits may be reduced by 25% if the covered individual used a tobacco product within the 5 years immediately preceding the cancer diagnosis.

If any individual that receives benefits under this bill thereafter receives Workers' Compensation Benefits for the same injury, then the Workers' Compensation Benefits or death benefits shall be reduced 100% by any benefits received from the Pool under this bill.

Furthermore, the employer in any Workers' Compensation claim shall be subrogated to the right of the employee or to the dependent or domestic partner to receive benefits from the Pool and such employer may recover any amounts which such employee or the dependent or domestic partner would have been entitled to recover from the Pool under this bill. Any receipt of benefits from the Pool under this bill shall be treated as an advance payment by the employer, on account of any future installments of Workers' Compensation Benefits.

Any Pool created for the purposes of this bill may accept or apply for grants or donations from any private or public source.

Furthermore, any such Pool may apply for grants from the State Fire Marshal. This provision expires June 30, 2023.

The bill also amends a provision of law relating to disbursement of grants to volunteer fire protection association workers' compensation insurance premiums for volunteer firefighters.

Current law requires the State Fire Marshal to disburse such grants to any applying association. This bill permits such disbursement.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that firefighters are contracting certain kinds of cancer at a higher rate than the general public. We need to support these heroes. We to help them get treatment early and support them in the care they need.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Hough; Arnie C. Dienoff; Greg Brown, Missouri Fire Service Alliance; Cory Hogan, Missouri State Council of Firefighters.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.