

HB 1861 -- FIRE FIGHTERS BILL OF RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Sauls

This bill establishes minimum standards that must be followed when a firefighter is under investigation and is subject to interrogation. The standards are specified in the bill and include, but are not limited to, notifying the firefighter in writing of the nature of the investigation and who will be conducting the interrogation and who will be present during the interrogation, as well as the names of the complainants. The bill also specifies that all firefighter investigations must be completed within 90 days of their commencement unless a firefighter under investigation is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable.

The bill further provides that no firefighter under investigation shall be subjected to any punitive action, denied promotion, discharged, disciplined, or be threatened with such, because he or she exercises his or her lawful rights under any existing administrative grievance procedures, statutes, or Constitutional provisions.

At the conclusion of an investigation, if an employer decides to discipline the firefighter, the firefighter must be notified in writing of the employer's decision within five days of the decision and at least 48 hours prior to the actual imposition of discipline.

A firefighter must not have his or her locker or other assigned space searched except in his or her presence or with his or her consent, unless a valid search warrant is first obtained. Lastly, a member of any fire department or fire protection district must not be prohibited from seeking public office.

This bill is similar to HB 564 (2023) and HB 2063 (2022).