

SS SCS HB 225 -- FIRST RESPONDERS

SALARIES FOR HIGHWAY PATROL (Section 43.080, RSMo)

Currently, the salary schedule report prepared by the Superintendent of the State Highway Patrol must include a comparison of the three largest police departments in the State. This bill requires the report to also include a comparison of the salaries and benefits of police officers employed by the law enforcement agencies located in surrounding states as specified in the bill.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CLEARANCE RATES (Sections 43.505 and 650.040)

This bill creates provisions related to law enforcement "clearance rates", defined in the bill as the rate at which law enforcement agencies clear an "offense by arrest" or an "offense cleared by exceptional means", also defined in the bill.

This bill requires law enforcement agencies in the State to collect data documenting clearance rates and report the data on a monthly basis to the Department of Public Safety beginning on January 1, 2026. The Department must publish the information quarterly on its website by the 15th of the month following the close of the preceding quarter. The Department must report the information to the Governor, the Missouri Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) Commission, the chair of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee and Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee by July 1, 2027, and every July after. The report will also be available on the Department's website.

The bill creates the "Missouri Violent Crime Clearance Grant Program" within the Department of Public Safety, the purpose of which is to improve law enforcement strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing violent crime clearance rates. The bill describes eligible uses for grant funding as well as to which law enforcement agencies the Department will give priority in awarding grants. Agencies awarded grant funding must report to the Department annually on the activities carried out to reduce violent crime and improve clearance rates during the preceding fiscal year, as specified in the bill.

ASSISTANCE FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (Section 44.087)

The bill allows the chief law enforcement executive for any law enforcement agency to request assistance from a law enforcement agency in another jurisdiction, including from outside the State

but within the United States. The bill creates provisions for how arrests are handled if executed by an officer outside of his or her jurisdiction. This bill specifies that, for benefits and other employment-related matters, law enforcement officers remain employees of their respective law enforcement agencies throughout any request for assistance.

SHERIFFS' FUNDS (Sections 57.280, 57.530, 57.952, 57.956, 57.961, 57.967, and 488.435)

This language specifies that the sheriff's office responsible for serving a summons, writ, or other order of the court will collect the \$20 charge associated with the service rather than the clerk of the court. The sheriff in any first, second, or fourth class county or a county with a charter form of government will receive an additional \$20 for service, and the sheriff in a third class county will receive an additional \$15. The maximum amount of funds that can be collected under the provisions of this section is increased from \$50,000 to \$75,000 in any calendar year, and, of the money received by the State Treasurer for collection of costs for service in a first, second, or fourth class county or a county with a charter form of government, \$10 is to be deposited into the Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund, and \$10 is to be deposited into the Sheriffs' Retirement Fund. If money is received from a county that does not have a sheriff that participates in the retirement system, the entire amount will be deposited in the Deputy Sheriff Supplementation Fund. Of the money received by the Treasurer from a third class county, \$10 is to be deposited into the Sheriffs' Supplementation Fund and \$5 to the retirement fund. If money is received from a county that does not have a sheriff that participates in the retirement system, all the money will be deposited into the supplementation fund.

The bill adds a clarification that a member of the sheriffs' retirement system is required to contribute 5% of the member's pay to the system, unless the employer is a county employer, in which case the employer will pay the contribution that would otherwise be payable by the member.

The bill repeals a provision that requires a \$3 surcharge to be assessed and collected--and deposited in the Sheriffs' Retirement Fund--in all civil actions and criminal cases except in cases where the costs are waived or paid by the state, county, or municipality or when a criminal proceeding or the defendant has been dismissed by the court.

The bill also repeals a provision that requires the Board of Directors of the Sheriffs' Retirement Fund to proportion the

benefits if insufficient funds are generated to pay the payable benefits.

The bill requires the annual compensation for sheriff's deputies in the City of St. Louis to be at least \$50,000.

This language requires, starting January 1, 2026, the Department of Corrections to pay to the State Treasurer from any per diem cost of incarceration \$1.75 per day per prisoner and that money will be deposited into the sheriffs' retirement fund. If the fund is funded to at least 90%, the DOC will only send to the Treasurer \$1 per day per prisoner to be deposited into the retirement fund.

#### PEACE OFFICER AGE OF SERVICE (Sections 84.540 and 84.570)

The bill prohibits a person from serving as a member of a police reserve force after the last day of the month in which the person turns 65 years old. A person is prohibited from serving as a law enforcement officer after the last day of the month in which the person turns 65 years old or reaches 35 years of creditable service, whichever occurs later.

#### FIREMEN'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM (Sections 87.140, 87.145, 87.155, 87.260, and 87.350)

This bill provides that the Board of Trustees of the Firemen's Retirement System of St. Louis ("Board") must not be prevented from simultaneously acting as the trustees of any other pension plan that provides retirement, disability, and death benefits for firefighters employed by St. Louis City. The administration of the other plan must be in accordance with the terms of such plan. Additionally, the administration of the other plan includes the ability of the Board to establish rules and regulations for the administration of the plan's funds and for the transaction of the plan's business. The Board shall maintain separate records of all proceedings of the pension plan.

This bill provides that the Board of Trustees has the authority and discretion to invest funds of the other pension plan in property of any kind. The Board may choose to invest the funds of the Firemen's Retirement System of St. Louis and the funds of the plan in the same investments if the amounts invested and the gains, profits, or losses are accounted for separately. No benefits due from the pension plan shall be paid from the funds of the System. Additionally, no expenses incurred by the Board in the administration of the other pension plan or in the investment of the other pension plan's funds shall be paid by the funds of the System. Finally, nothing in this bill prevents the Board of Aldermen of St. Louis City from adopting ordinances relating to the

pensioning of firefighters and their dependents in regards to other pension plans administered by the Board.

AUTHORIZED TAX LEVIES (Sections 94.900, 144.757, 321.552, 321.554 and 321.556)

The bill adds the cities of Joplin, Hannibal, Moberly, Richmond, Warrensburg, Lexington, and Lake Lotawana to the list of cities authorized to impose a sales tax at a rate of up to 0.5% for the purposes of improving public safety.

Current law authorizes counties and municipalities to impose a local use tax if a local sales tax is imposed. This bill extends this authority to any political subdivision with the ability to impose a sales tax for emergency services.

Current law authorizes ambulance and fire protection districts in certain counties to propose a sales tax at a rate of up to 0.5%. This bill allows such districts to propose a sales tax of up to 1.0%, and repeals a prohibition on certain counties imposing such tax.

PUBLIC SAFETY RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT ACT (Sections 173.2655 and 173.2660)

This bill establishes the "Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Act" to provide college tuition awards for certain public safety personnel and their legal dependents. The bill defines "public safety personnel" as including any police officer, firefighter, paramedic, telecommunicator first responder, emergency medical technician, or advanced emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or treatment. Subject to appropriation, public safety personnel with at least six years of service will be entitled to an award worth up to 100% of the resident tuition charges, including fees, of an institution of higher education located in Missouri if they present to the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) verification of their current, valid license in a profession specified in the bill, along with a certificate of verification signed by their employer verifying that they are employed full-time as public safety personnel. The individuals must also meet all admission requirements of the public institution of higher education and pursue an associate or baccalaureate degree in an academic subject specified in the bill. Individuals who have already earned a baccalaureate degree are ineligible to use the tuition award to earn another degree. Each year an individual applies for and receives a tuition award, he or she must file with DHEWD documentation showing proof of employment and proof of residence in Missouri. Additionally, an applicant for a tuition

award must first apply for all other forms of Federal and State student financial aid, including filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and, if applicable, applying for financial assistance under the G.I. Bill.

A legal dependent of public safety personnel with at least 10 years of service is also eligible for a tuition award if he or she executes an agreement with a public institution of higher education outlining the terms and conditions of the tuition award, including the legal dependent's commitment to reside in Missouri for the next five years, as well as a commitment to provide a copy of his or her State income tax return annually to DHEWD in order to prove residency in Missouri. The agreement must also include a provision that, if the tuition award recipient fails to provide proof of residency in Missouri for the five-year period following the use of the tuition award, the tuition award must be treated as a loan to the recipient, with the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority as the loan servicer, as provided in the bill. Finally, the agreement must provide that any residency, filing, or payment obligation incurred by the tuition award recipient under the bill is canceled in the event of the tuition award recipient's total and permanent disability or death.

The five-year residency requirement for a legal dependent who receives a tuition award begins once the legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition award and continues until the tuition award recipient:

- (1) Completes the five-year tuition award eligibility period;
- (2) Completes a baccalaureate degree;
- (3) Completes an associate degree and notifies DHEWD that he or she does not intend to pursue a baccalaureate degree or additional associate degree using tuition awards; or
- (4) Notifies DHEWD that he or she does not plan to use additional tuition awards.

The legal dependent must satisfy certain criteria to be eligible for a tuition award. The legal dependent must not have previously earned a baccalaureate degree, and he or she must meet all admission requirements of the public institution of higher education he or she wishes to attend. The legal dependent will also file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid and, if applicable, apply for financial assistance under the G.I. Bill, as well as providing verification of the public safety personnel's eligibility for the tuition award to DHEWD, as provided in the bill.

Public safety personnel and their legal dependents can receive a tuition award for up to five consecutive years if they otherwise continue to be eligible. The five years of eligibility starts once the individual applies for and receives the tuition award for the first time. DHEWD must grant an award worth up to 100% of the individual's tuition remaining due after subtracting awarded federal financial aid grants and state scholarships and grants. An application for a tuition award must include a verification of the public safety personnel's satisfaction of the requirements of the act, including proof of full-time employment and residency status. Public safety personnel must include the verification when they or their legal dependents are applying to DHEWD for a tuition award.

The death of public safety personnel in the line of duty will not disqualify an individual's otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the tuition award. In such a case, in lieu of submitting verification of the public safety personnel's employment, the legal dependent must submit a statement attesting that, at the time of death, the public safety personnel satisfied the requirements of the act, and the individual died in the line of duty, as specified in the bill.

DHEWD will provide a tuition award to an eligible applicant for the award who applies for an "open seat", defined in the bill as a vacant position in a class, course, or program that is available for enrollment. DHEWD will not provide a tuition award if doing so would require a public institution of higher education to create additional seats exceeding program capacity.

Applications for tuition awards must be submitted to DHEWD no later than December 15th, annually. No later than March 1st annually, DHEWD will send written notice of the applicant's eligibility or ineligibility for the tuition award and state whether the application has been approved or denied. If the applicant is determined not to be eligible for the tuition award, the notice must include the reason or reasons for the determination. If the application is denied, the notice must include the reason or reasons for the denial.

The "Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Fund" is created for purposes of granting tuition awards as provided in the bill. In the event that funds are insufficient to provide tuition awards for all eligible applicants, public safety personnel will be in the first class of applicants to receive the awards, and dependents will be in the second class, in a priority order specified in the bill.

The tuition awards provided for in this bill are subject to appropriation. If there are no moneys in the Fund, no tuition awards will be granted.

AMBULANCE SERVICES (Sections 190.053, 190.076, 190.101, 190.109, 190.112, 190.166, 190.800, 321.552, 321.554, and 321.556)

The bill modifies training requirements for members of an ambulance district board of directors. Under this bill, board members must complete three hours of continuing education for each term of office. Failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification and the office will be vacant until filled.

The bill requires each ambulance district to arrange for an audit of the district's records and accounts every three years by a certified public accountant. The audit must be made available to the public on the district's website or otherwise freely available by other electronic means.

This bill modifies the State Advisory Council on Emergency Medical Services by changing the number of council members from 16 to no more than 23 and specifying the members who shall serve on the Council. Currently, members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Under this bill, the Director of the Department of Health and Senior Services, the regional EMS advisory committees, and the Time-Critical Diagnosis Advisory Committee shall appoint members.

The Department of Health and Seniors Services, as a part of regulating ground ambulance service licenses, will promulgate rules regarding participation with regional emergency medical services advisory committees and ambulance service administrator qualifications.

The bill requires ambulance services to report to the Department individuals serving as ambulance service administrators. These administrators are required to complete training as provided in the bill.

The Department may refuse to issue, deny renewal of, or suspend a license required for ground ambulance services or take other corrective actions if the license holder is determined to be financially insolvent, has inadequate personnel for the service provided, requires an inordinate amount of mutual aid from neighboring services, has been determined to be criminally liable for actions related to the license or service provided, has been determined to be ineligible for participation in Medicare or MO HealthNet, whose ambulance district administrator has failed to meet the required qualifications or training, or if three or more

board members have failed to complete required training. If the Department makes a determination of insolvency or insufficiency of services, then the Department may require the license holder to submit and complete a corrective plan, as specified in the bill.

The Department is required to provide notice of any determination of insolvency or insufficiency of services to other license holders operating in the license holder's vicinity, members of the General Assembly who represent that area, other governing officials, the appropriate regional emergency medical services advisory committee, and the State Advisory Council on Emergency Medical Services. The Department must immediately engage with other license holders in the area to determine how ground ambulance services may be provided to the affected area during the service disruption. Assisting license holders may be compensated for the assistance as provided in the bill.

For the purposes of reimbursement allowance taxes, current law exempts ambulance services that are owned and operated by an entity owned and operated by the state of Missouri from being required to pay an ambulance service reimbursement allowance tax. This bill repeals that exemption.

#### SPECIALTY HOSPITALS (Section 197.135)

This bill exempts specialty hospitals from certain provisions of state law relating to forensic examinations of victims of sexual assault if that hospital has a policy for the transfer of those individuals to an appropriate hospital with an emergency department.

#### LINE OF DUTY COMPENSATION ACT (Section 287.243)

Currently, a claim for compensation for a public safety officer killed in the line of duty must be filed within one year and the compensation is \$25,000. This bill changes the time frame to two years and increases the amount to \$100,000. The bill also adds death by illness as qualifying for compensation under the Line of Duty Compensation Act. The bill repeals the sunset date for the Act.

#### AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES (Sections 300.100 and 304.022)

This bill adds a vehicle operated by a county or municipal park ranger to the definition of "emergency vehicle." The bill provides that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle is not required to use an audible signal or display a visual signal when the vehicle is being used to get evidence of a speeding violation; respond to a suspected crime in progress when use of an



audible or visual signal, or both, could reasonably result in the destruction of evidence or escape of a suspect; or conduct surveillance of a vehicle or the passengers of a vehicle who are suspected of involvement in a crime.

#### ACCIDENT CLEARANCE IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS (Section 304.153)

This bill allows a firefighter in the City of St. Louis to authorize a towing company to remove a vehicle from the scene of an accident or to remove a vehicle that poses an immediate traffic hazard.

#### MILITARY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (Section 324.009)

Current law requires an oversight body for professional licenses to waive any examination, educational, or experience requirements within 30 days for a resident military spouse or a nonresident military spouse and issue the applicant a license if the applicant meets all other requirements. This bill provides a waiver to resident and nonresident spouses of Missouri law enforcement officers.

#### RENDERING EMERGENCY CARE (Section 537.038)

The bill allows a person to render emergency care or assistance at the scene of an emergency or accident without compensation and without being liable for any civil damages for acts or omissions other than damages occasioned by gross negligence or by willful or wanton acts or omissions by the person in rendering the emergency care.

#### INTERFERENCE WITH A FIRST RESPONDER (Section 574.207)

This bill creates the offense of interference with a first responder, which is a class B misdemeanor for a first offense and a class A misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense. A person commits the offense when a person has received a verbal warning not to approach from a first responder who is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal duty and the person knowingly and willfully violates the verbal warning and approaches within 20 feet with the intent to:

(1) Impede or interfere with the first responder's ability to perform his or her legal duty;

(2) Threaten the first responder with physical harm; or

(3) Engage in conduct directed at a first responder that intentionally causes emotional distress and serves no legitimate purpose.