

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**2SSB 5335**

**AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 18, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Allowing benefits for emergency medical service district volunteers.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen and Barr)

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5335 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Roach, Vice Chairman; Madsen, and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

**Hearing Dates:** February 18, 1991; March 4, 1991

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5335 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, M. Kreidler, Metcalf, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Owen, Rinehart, Saling, L. Smith, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Denise Graham (786-7715)

**Hearing Dates:** February 11, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

There are emergency medical districts in the state that depend on the services of volunteers. These volunteers are not covered under worker's compensation provisions, nor are they covered under any relief or pension plans. Volunteer fire fighters are covered under the volunteer fire fighters' pension and relief act.

**SUMMARY:**

Volunteer emergency medical district workers are covered under the existing volunteer firefighters' relief and pension provisions. A board of trustees in each county with an emergency medical district administers the pension and relief provisions. The board of trustees is composed of three county commissioners, the county clerk, a councilmember from each

city in the district, the head of the emergency district, and one elected member of the emergency district.

The state Board of Volunteer Firefighters is responsible for setting the contribution rates for the pension fund and for the relief fund. Contributions for pensions are to be paid by the districts and the emergency workers. Contributions for relief are to be paid by the districts.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR (Governmental Operations):**

It is hard to recruit new people to do this work. Generally, volunteers take 110 hours to train and they quit after three years. It is expensive to volunteer due to cost of day care, ruined clothes, and the use of private vehicles. This bill is necessary to encourage volunteers and new recruits. It is a way of thanking the volunteers and providing protection. This will assist in building emergency medical services around the state, especially in rural areas.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Governmental Operations):**

Coverage should come from the volunteer firefighter relief and pension funds. The state should authorize an increase in property tax to pay for this program.

**TESTIFIED (Governmental Operations):** Dale Rawley, Brenda Calico, Bill Curtis, Oroville Ambulance (pro); Janet Griffith, Department of Health (pro); Rick Wickman, Association of Washington Counties (con); Robb Menaul, Washington State Hospital Association (pro)

**TESTIMONY FOR (Ways & Means):**

This bill should be passed because volunteer emergency medical workers are deserving people, just as deserving as volunteer firefighters. The impact on the state would be minimal.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ways & Means):** None

**TESTIFIED (Ways & Means):** Senators Rasmussen and Barr, sponsors