

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2833

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the state board for volunteer fire fighters and reserve officers.

Brief Description: Adding members to the state board for volunteer fire fighters and reserve officers.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Eickmeyer, Green, Morris, Crouse, Armstrong, Curtis, Sump, Dunshee and Clements.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/25/06, 1/30/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adds two members to the State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters and Reserve Officers and authorizes the Governor to consider recommendations from appropriate state associations when making appointments.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Buri, Chandler, Clements, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, P. Sullivan, Talcott and Walsh.

Staff: Kristen Fraser (786-7148).

Background:

The Volunteer Fire Fighters' and Reserve Officers' Relief and Pension System (VFFRORPS) provides death, disability, medical, and retirement benefits to volunteer fire fighters and reserve officers in cities, towns, and fire protection districts. The system is funded by member and employer contributions and a portion of the fire insurance premium tax.

Employers are required to participate in the death, disability, and medical benefit plans offered by the VFFRORPS, but participation in the pension component is optional. About 18,000

members are covered by the death, disability, and medical benefits, and 12,000 members are covered by the pension benefits.

The State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters and Reserve Officers (Board) administers this system. The Board consists of three members of fire departments covered by the VFFRORPS, no two of whom may be from the same congressional district. The members are appointed by the Governor for overlapping six-year terms.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Two additional members are added to the State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters and Reserve Officers, for a total of five Board members. The members may be volunteer firefighters or reserve officers. No more than three of the members may be receiving relief or retirement pension payments under the VFFRORPS. In making appointments to the Board, the Governor may consider participants who are recommended for appointment by appropriate state associations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill permits, rather than requires, the Governor to consider recommendations made by state associations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The volunteer fire fighters support this bill. It does several good things, including adding members to the Board and opening up Board membership to reserve officers as well as volunteer firefighters.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Tamara Warnke, Washington State Fire Fighters Association; and T. J. Nedrow, Washington State Fire Fighters Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.