

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6290

As of January 13, 2006

Title: An act relating to requiring state agencies to allow volunteer fire fighters to respond when called to duty.

Brief Description: Requiring state agencies to allow volunteer fire fighters to respond when called to duty.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon, Kline, Fraser, Shin, Doumit and Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/16/06.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The Director of the Department of Personnel (Director) is required to adopt rules for sick leaves and vacations for employees in classified state service. These rules provide for those circumstances in which an employee must be granted leave with pay and those circumstances in which it is discretionary with the employer to grant leave with pay. Employees performing civil duties as a volunteer including but not limited to fire fighting, search and rescue efforts, and donating blood are in the discretionary leave with pay category.

Members of the National Guard who are in classified state service must be granted military leave with pay, not to exceed 15 working days per year, for active duty and active training duty.

The statute for employment in the private sector prohibits an employer from discharging or disciplining a volunteer fire fighter or reserve officer because of leave taken related to an alarm of fire or an emergency call. This applies if the volunteer is not already at his or her place of employment when called to serve as a volunteer, unless the employer agrees to provide such an accommodation, and the employee is ordered to remain at his or her position by the commanding authority at the scene of the fire.

The Director has also adopted rules concerning the leave without pay category. The granting of leave without pay is discretionary in classified state service in the case of leave for government service in the public interest. The granting of a military leave of absence for service in the uniformed services of the United States or the state is mandatory.

Summary of Bill: An agency is required to allow an employee who is a volunteer fire fighter to respond to a fire or natural disaster when called to duty. The leave status of the employee is leave without pay. The agency may grant leave with pay, at the agency's discretion.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.