

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6250

As of January 18, 2016

Title: An act relating to providing public fire department employees the right to volunteer for or obtain employment with another fire department.

Brief Description: Providing public fire department employees the right to volunteer for or obtain employment with another fire department.

Sponsors: Senators Braun and Takko.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 1/18/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

Background: Fire protection districts are municipal corporations created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services within the district's boundary. Fire protection districts are governed by a board of commissioners consisting of three, five, or seven members.

Cities and towns with full-time, paid fire departments are subject to the state civil service laws for city firefighters, including the requirements for establishing a civil service commission that adopts rules with regard to personnel administration for its fire department employees, including but not limited to: appointments, promotions, transfers, reinstatements, demotions, suspensions, and terminations.

By resolution of its commissioners, a fire protection district with a full-time, paid fire department may provide for civil service in its fire department in the same manner as cities and towns.

Employees of municipal fire departments and fire protection districts collectively bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act. Unless prohibited by law, collective bargaining agreements may contain provisions regarding any personnel-related matters, including wages, hours, and working conditions.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Current law is silent as to whether employees of fire protection districts and municipal fire departments can volunteer for, or obtain employment with, other fire departments.

Summary of Bill: Employees of fire protection districts and municipal fire departments are authorized to volunteer for, or obtain part-time or on-call employment with, other public fire departments so long as it does not conflict with the employee's performance. Collective bargaining agreements cannot prohibit these employees from volunteering or obtaining part-time or on-call employment with other public fire departments.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Volunteering is a valuable service firefighters provide to communities. It is difficult for fire departments to recruit and retain volunteers and there is a lack of adequate personnel in certain areas. The bill ensures efficient allocation of resources and encourages volunteering.

CON: People are already volunteering. The bill creates a conflict with industrial insurance because people are exposed to hazards outside of their original employment, but the original employer is responsible.

Persons Testifying: PRO: TJ Nedrow, Washington State Fire Fighters' Association; Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners.

CON: Michael White, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters.

Persons Signed in to testify but not testifying: None.