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HOUSE BILL 2805

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Reykdal, Griffey, Moeller, Van De Wege, Gregerson, Ormsby, Sawyer, Stokesbary, Tarleton, Fitzgibbon, Morris, Stanford, Pollet, Frame, Goodman, and Bergquist

Read first time 01/21/16. Referred to Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards.

1 AN ACT Relating to mandatory reporting of hazardous exposures for  
2 firefighters; adding a new section to chapter 51.32 RCW; adding a new  
3 section to chapter 42.56 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that firefighters  
6 are regularly exposed to hazardous substances through the course of  
7 their employment. These exposures result in firefighters contracting  
8 diseases such as cancer at significantly higher rates than the  
9 general population which, in addition to the human suffering  
10 involved, creates enormous costs to workers' compensation and health  
11 care insurance programs. Despite increased risk and costs, there is  
12 no reliable reporting requirement in place to consistently track and  
13 account for these hazardous exposures, and therefore no way to  
14 determine whether these exposures are fully or partially preventable.  
15 A mandatory reporting requirement would facilitate identification of  
16 common exposures and assist in creating training curricula, policies,  
17 and procedures designed to minimize, mitigate, or eliminate these  
18 hazardous exposures altogether. The legislature further finds that  
19 exposures reported by firefighters are medical records which should  
20 not be subject to public disclosure. Therefore, the legislature  
21 intends to establish a mandatory, on-the-job hazardous exposure

1 reporting requirement for firefighters and further intends to enact  
2 protections to prevent public disclosure of personally identifiable  
3 information collected under section 2 of this act.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 51.32  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 Beginning July 1, 2016, the department shall begin rule making to  
7 require the reporting of all hazardous exposures suffered in the  
8 course of employment by firefighters covered under RCW 51.32.185. At  
9 a minimum, the rules must:

10 (1) Require reports of exposures to be maintained for at least  
11 six years following the last date of the firefighter's employment as  
12 a firefighter;

13 (2) Require reports of exposures to be maintained in a database  
14 that is readily accessible to firefighters; and

15 (3) Address the nondisclosure of reports to protect the privacy  
16 of firefighters' personal information.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 42.56  
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 Reports of hazardous exposures reported by firefighters under  
20 section 2 of this act are exempt from disclosure under this chapter  
21 and must be automatically withheld from public inspection and  
22 copying.

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