

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 7837

BILL NUMBER: SB 561

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 11, 2005

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Employment Absence for Volunteer Firefighters.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Antich-Carr

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

**FUNDS AFFECTED: GENERAL
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL**

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill prohibits a private employer from disciplining an employee who is a volunteer firefighter for being late to work when the employee is responding to a fire or an emergency call, and allows a civil action against an employer who disciplines an employee for this reason. It authorizes a private employer to: (1) request proof that the employee was engaged in fire or emergency activity when absent; and (2) require the employee to notify the employer of the expected absence before the scheduled start time. The bill provides that a private or public employer other than the state is not required to pay salary or wages for volunteer firefighting time away from employment, although other accrued benefit remuneration may be paid. The bill also specifies that the agent of a public employer other than the state who has authorized an absence for volunteer firefighting purposes has not committed ghost employment.

Effective Date: July 1, 2005.

Explanation of State Expenditures:

Explanation of State Revenues: *Court Fee Revenue:* According to current statute, an employee of a political subdivision employer, who volunteers as a firefighter and is disciplined for being absent from work because of responding to a fire or emergency, may bring a civil action against the employer. In the action, the employee may seek payment for back wages, reinstatement to a former position, fringe benefits, and seniority benefits wrongly denied the employee.

This bill expands the definition of an employer to include private employers. Expanding the definition of an employer increases the potential for civil actions to be filed.

If additional civil actions occur, revenue to the state General Fund may increase if court fees are collected. A civil filing fee of \$100 would be assessed when a civil case is filed, 70% of which would be deposited in the state General Fund if the case is filed in a court of record or 55% if the case is filed in a city or town court.

Explanation of Local Expenditures:

Explanation of Local Revenues: *Court Fee Revenue:* If additional civil actions occur, local governments would receive revenue from the following sources. The county general fund would receive 27% of the \$100 filing fee that is assessed in a court of record. Cities and towns maintaining a law enforcement agency that prosecutes at least 50% of its ordinance violations in a court of record may receive 3% of court fees. If the case is filed in a city or town court, 20% of the court fee would be deposited in the county general fund and 25% would be deposited in the city or town general fund.

State Agencies Affected:

Local Agencies Affected: Trial courts, city and town courts.

Information Sources:

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