

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6838

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION, REVISING THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND REQUIRING A STUDY OF THE

Title: FIRE SERVICE IN THE STATE.

Vote Date: 3/16/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/9/2023

File No.: 367

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee,
Rep. Patrick Boyd, 50th District,
Rep. Ben McGorty, 112nd District,
Sen. MD Rahman, 4th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

In order to replace the Officer of State Fire Administrator (OSFA), the bill proposes the creation of a new Division of Fire Services Administration (DFSA) within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP). The DFSA would undertake the functions, duties, and personnel of the OSFA while being bestowed with additional responsibilities, such as distributing funds to fire schools and delegating authority to a deputy commissioner with relevant firefighting experience. The bill also mandates the DFSA to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Public Safety and Security Committee on its activities, recommendations, and proposals for promoting firefighter training provided to DESPP. Additionally, the DESPP is directed to contract a study to identifying the state's fire service needs and develop a strategic master plan to be presented to the legislature and implemented. Re-establishing the fire services administration as a division would provide DESPP the appropriate structure and responsibility to execute the strategic plan.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Commissioner, James Rovella:](#) supports the intention of the Committee to identify methods of improving recruitment among

first responders but maintains that Section 1 of this bill is unnecessary. It is stated the functions assigned to the new division of Fire Services Administration are redundant with those of the existing administrator.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Carrier Corporation, Associate Director of Government Relations, Erika Scheffer](#): supports this legislation with amendments to restrict the sale of battery-powered smoke alarms to long-lasting, tamper-resistant ones powered by non-replaceable batteries. They argued that functional smoke alarms save lives and cited statistics from the NFPA. The company explained that non-replaceable batteries reduce the potential for human error and eliminate waste. They thanked the committee for considering their testimony.

[Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations, Delegates, Greg Priest, Jim Baldis, John Carew](#): support this bill because it requires a study to be conducted on fire-services in the state. It is stated that the fire service has identified several difficulties or opportunities for improvement in the profession, and this study would help develop a strategic plan that outlines the needs of the state's fire services. It is further explained that this bill would increase the state's ability to support the fire service and implement the strategic plan.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Lukas Houle

Date: 3/29/2023