

SENATE BILL 414

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3lr1535
CF HB 788

By: **Senators Augustine, Gallion, Beidle, Brooks, Carozza, Elfreth, Feldman, Hester, Kagan, King, Kramer, and Watson**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2023

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 5, 2023

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting and Emergency Medical**
3 **Services Within Maryland**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting
5 and Emergency Medical Services Within Maryland to study and make
6 recommendations regarding the effectiveness and viability of certain incentives,
7 offerings, or practices employed in other states to attract, support, and retain
8 individuals in fire fighting and emergency medical services roles; and generally
9 relating to the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting and Emergency
10 Medical Services Within Maryland.

11 Preamble

12 WHEREAS, The lives and property of Maryland residents and businesses are all
13 protected and benefit greatly from strong and efficient fire, rescue, and emergency medical
14 service response systems, coordinated at the county and community level across Maryland;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, The social and demographic makeup of communities has largely shifted,
17 presenting both career and volunteer fire companies great difficulty in recruiting and
18 retaining individuals for service; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 WHEREAS, Appropriate training standards for fire and emergency medical service
2 in either a career or volunteer capacity are important but also create a meaningful barrier
3 to new entrants into any fire fighting or emergency medical service capacity; and

4 WHEREAS, A stark shortage of available recruits and on-duty firefighters and
5 emergency medical services personnel have caused fire companies to call on volunteers who
6 are well into ages 60 and 70 years old for primary response to fire and emergency medical
7 calls; and

8 WHEREAS, Volunteer fire companies remain deeply embedded in many
9 communities, serving as the primary fire fighting and emergency medical response across
10 large parts of the State; and

11 WHEREAS, Relatively metropolitan parts of the State rely on coordinated services
12 from both career and volunteer firefighters and emergency medical services personnel to
13 provide needed service coverage, but face strains in finding adequate participation at both
14 levels; and

15 WHEREAS, Maryland and its local governments currently offer a variety of support
16 incentives, staff benefits, and other compensation targeted to volunteer fire company
17 members; and

18 WHEREAS, The recruitment and retention of both career and volunteer firefighters
19 ~~poses~~ and emergency medical services personnel pose an urgent and high priority concern
20 for Marylanders' safety and security in the short term and long term; now, therefore,

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That:

23 (a) There is a Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting and
24 Emergency Medical Services Within Maryland.

25 (b) The Commission consists of the following members:

26 (1) one representative of the Maryland Department of Labor, appointed by
27 the Secretary of Labor;

28 (2) the Executive Director of the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute, or the
29 Executive Director's designee;

30 (3) the Executive Director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency
31 Medical Services Systems, or the Executive Director's designee;

32 (4) two representatives from the Maryland Municipal League, designated
33 by the President of the Maryland Municipal League;

1 (5) two citizen representatives, designated by the President of the
2 Maryland State Firemen's Association;

3 (6) two representatives from the Professional Firefighters of Maryland,
4 designated by the President of the Professional Firefighters of Maryland;

5 (7) one representative from the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association,
6 designated by the President of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association;

7 (8) one representative from the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association,
8 designated by the President of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association; and

9 (9) the following members designated by the President of the Maryland
10 Association of Counties:

11 (i) one county government representative with experience in county
12 budgeting; and

13 (ii) one citizen representative.

14 (c) The members of the Commission shall elect a chair from among the
15 Commission's members.

16 (d) The Maryland Department of Labor shall provide staff for the Commission.

17 (e) A member of the Commission:

18 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission; but

19 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
20 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

21 (f) The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding:

22 (1) the effectiveness and viability of uniform incentives, offerings, or
23 practices employed in other states to attract, support, and retain individuals in fire fighting
24 and emergency medical services roles;

25 (2) the suitability of comparable or similar incentives, offerings, and
26 practices as compared to the landscape of the State; and

27 (3) any other global issues the Commission may consider useful in
28 enhancing and supporting career and volunteer fire fighting and emergency medical
29 services in the State.

1 (g) On or before December 1, 2023, the Commission shall report its findings and
2 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
3 Government Article, the General Assembly.

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
5 1, 2023. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
6 30, 2024, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
7 abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.