

- SUBJECT:** Modifying meet and confer for firefighters in certain municipalities
- COMMITTEE:** Urban Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 4 ayes — Bailey, Murphy, Cohen, Mallory Caraway  
0 nays  
3 absent — Menendez, Latham, Martinez Fischer
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 10 — 30-1 (Patrick)
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** In 2005, the 79th Legislature enacted HB 2892 by Luna, which added Local Government Code, ch. 142, subch. C to sanction meet-and-confer agreements for firefighters in municipalities that are larger than 50,000 or that have adopted civil service agreements. Under the bill, cities may elect to “meet and confer” with firefighter committees to reach agreements on compensation and other work-related conditions. Negotiated agreements between a governing body and eligible employees resulting from meet-and-confer procedures vary by municipality.
- Certain municipalities that have adopted meet-and-confer agreements under ch. 142, subch. C have interpreted the statutory provisions as prohibiting informal meetings between city officials and firefighters outside of formal meet-and-confer procedures.
- The subchapter also allows firefighters to modify or change the recognized association by filing with the governing body of the municipality a petition signed by a majority of all covered firefighters. Existing statutory provisions do not explicitly authorize a procedure for verifying such a petition.
- DIGEST:** SB 1212 would amend Local Government Code, ch. 142, subch. C to specify that a local ordinance, charter, provision, meet-and-confer agreement, or other order or rule adopted could not interfere with the right of an individual firefighter or officer of a firefighters association to

communicate with the governing body of the municipality on an issue not governed by a meet-and-confer agreement.

The bill would add provisions specifying that signatures contained in a petition received to change a recognized bargaining agent could be verified by the American Arbitration Association or Federal Mediation Conciliation Service. Verification expenses would be assumed by the recognized firefighters association.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2007.