

- SUBJECT:** Increasing the compensation cap for emergency services commissioners
- COMMITTEE:** County Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Coleman, Springer, Hunter, Neave, Roberts
- 1 nay — Biedermann
- 3 absent — Stickland, Thierry, Uresti
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Wayne Smith, Emergency Services District Number 6)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Under Health and Safety Code, sec. 775.038, the commissioner of an emergency services district may receive compensation of no more than \$50 per day worked, not to exceed \$3,000 per year.
- Under Water Code, sec. 49.060, the director of a water district may receive compensation of no more than \$150 per day worked, not to exceed \$7,200 per year.
- DIGEST:** HB 2504 would amend the Health and Safety Code to authorize the commissioner of an emergency services district to receive the same compensation provided to the director of a water district by Water Code, sec. 49.060.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 2504 would provide a uniform compensation rate between water districts and emergency services districts (ESDs), both of which serve critical public service roles. ESDs were first established to provide volunteer firefighting services, but the role of a district has since expanded to include ambulance and other emergency services. As communities across the state continue to grow, the need for these services expands as

well.

The current commissioner compensation cap hampers personnel retention, as ESDs must compete with other local first responders for personnel. The bill would provide adequate compensation for an expansion of services and ensure that ESDs remained competitive with market demands.

HB 2504 would not increase taxes or adopt an unfunded mandate. Its language is permissive, giving room for ESDs to compensate their commissioners appropriately while allowing for a range of pay rates below the cap as appropriate to the fiscal situation of each district.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

HB 2504 would almost triple the pay for ESD commissioners, raising concerns about increased spending in the district. While these commissioners do important work, there is no compelling reason right now for a bill that would authorize such a substantial increase in pay.