

SUBJECT: Changing compensation comparisons for fire fighters and police officers

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Alvarado, Bernal, Elkins, Isaac, J. Johnson

0 nays

2 absent — Leach, Zedler

WITNESSES: For — Michael Glynn, Fort Worth Firefighters Association and International Association of Fire Fighters Local 440; Johnny Villarreal, Houston Fire Fighters Local 341; (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Crow, Arlington Professional Fire Fighters; Bob Nicks, Austin Firefighters Association; Charley Wilkison, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT); Rob Gibson, Fort Worth Firefighters Association; Aidan Alvarado, David Gonzalez and Rolando Solis, Laredo Fire Fighters Association; Michael Silva, Mission Fire Fighters Association; John Carlton, Texas State Association of Fire and Emergency Districts; Glenn Deshields, Texas State Association of Fire Fighters)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Local Government Code, ch. 174 establishes the Fire and Police Employee Relations Act (FPERA). Under the act, a municipality must provide fire fighters and police officers with compensation and other conditions of employment that are substantially equal to those in the private sector.

When FPERA was enacted, it was intended to allow fire fighters and police departments to compare their compensation and working conditions with those of various jobs in the private sector, often including the building trades, that required similar skills, abilities, and training. Some observers have suggested that these private sector trades differ significantly from the work of fire fighters and police and question

whether they are useful comparisons.

DIGEST: HB 3193 would require a municipality to provide firefighters and police officers with compensation and other conditions of employment substantially equal to those of other comparable fire and police departments, rather than compensation and conditions prevailing in comparable private sector employment.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

NOTES: A companion bill, SB 1961 by Lucio, was referred to the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee on March 27.