

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2667
By: Latham (Deuell)
State Affairs
5/18/2007
Committee Report (Amended)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, many of the volunteer firefighters and volunteer police force members must pay medical expenses for injuries that occur while in the line of duty. While the public does show its gratitude for these members of society who volunteer their time and efforts to protect others, it is often overlooked that individuals injured in the course of protecting the public must pay for their health care costs out of pocket or rely on pre-existing medical insurance to cover their expenses.

H.B. 2667 adds audit costs for worker's compensation claims to the uses for which the rural volunteer fire department insurance fund is authorized to be used. This bill also defines "volunteer police force member" and requires insurance coverage for those persons.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the director of the Texas Forest Service in SECTION 1 (Section 614.072, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 614.072(b), Government Code, to authorize the director of the Texas Forest Service to adopt rules necessary to assist rural volunteer fire departments in the payments of certain costs, including audit costs for workers' compensation claims in any year in which there is an abnormally high number of wildfires.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 614, Government Code, by adding Subchapter H, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. INSURANCE COVERAGE REQUIRED FOR VOLUNTEER POLICE FORCE MEMBERS

Sec. 614.121. DEFINITION. Defines "volunteer police force member."

Sec. 614.122. INSURANCE COVERAGE REQUIRED. Requires each volunteer police force member to be insured by the applicable state agency or political subdivision against any injury suffered by the police force member in the course and scope of performing the person's assigned duties at the request of or under a contract with a state agency or political subdivision.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 775.084(i), Health and Safety Code, to provide that this section (Competitive Bids) does not apply to certain items, including the purchase of insurance coverage or repairs funded by a payment made under an insurance claim.

SECTION 4. Makes application of Subchapter H, Chapter 614, Government Code, as added by this Act, prospective to January 1, 2008.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2007.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

(1)-(3) Amends SECTION 2 of the bill, in added Section 614.122, Government Code (house engrossment, page 2, lines 4 through 9), as follows:

Sec. 614.122. INSURANCE COVERAGE REQUIRED. (a) Requires each volunteer police force member to be insured or covered by the applicable state agency or political subdivision against any injury suffered by the police force member in the course and scope of performing the person's assigned duties at the request of or under a contract with a state agency or political subdivision.

(b) Authorizes the applicable state agency or political subdivision to satisfy the requirements of Subsection (a) by providing insurance coverage or entering into an interlocal agreement with another political subdivision providing for self-insurance.