

Fire Service Joint Legislative Committee
2007 Legislative Update

SB254 – Ga. State Indemnification Fund – This is a Governor’s bill that would amend the current indemnification to allow the Dept. of Adm. Services (DOAS) to be the custodian and administrator of the indemnification fund. The bill seeks to increase the line of duty death benefit to \$100,000.00 and add a benefit for partial disability. The bill still would not cover volunteer firefighters during training. It also would now not cover commuting to and from work or to and from training. The makeup of the indemnification commission would also change (page-5 & 6). It also appears that the benefits would now be taxable where they were not before. You can read this and other bills at <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>, please go to this web site for information on bills and scheduled meetings. We do have a meeting scheduled with Joe Kim of the DOAS on Monday, March 12 at 10:30 am.

SB44 – Officers Training Development – Passed by the Senate currently in the House. As we understand it now it will be considered toward the end of the session. Governor’s office questioning the need for this to be legislated they had rather do this through the budgeting process. We have explained that we would rather have legislation and the monies annualized. While the money could not be made available either way, legislation seems less risky than budgeting. They also questioned the lack of mandated training. We explained the number of volunteers in the state and the need to take the training to them and make the training voluntary to start with and move toward mandated training in the future. There is a meeting scheduled on this bill for March 14, at 1:00 pm in room 506 in the CLOB.

HB113 was a companion bill for SB44. Since they were identical Rep. Burke Day decided to not move forward with HB113 and concentrate on SB44 since it had passed the Senate so quickly. HB113 is not dead yet and can be brought back if need be. WE are in the process of requesting Rep. Burke Day to reconsider and move this bill forward just in case there is any trouble with SB44.

HB48 – Deals with line of duty death indemnification – Came out of the House Appropriations Committee on Monday. It is now in the House Rules Committee. We are working with Rep. Jill Chambers on this bill. She has been very willing to make changes in the bill that has improved it for the fire service. This started out as a bill to include the MARTA Police in the indemnification coverage. If you know anyone on the House Rules Committee please contact them about this bill. We have been contacted by some MARTA representatives concerning this bill. They had some concerns about adding volunteers. After we explained that volunteers were already covered for everything except training they seemed satisfied.

HB290 – Fixed ladders on dwellings 15 ft and over – Everyone that we have talked to in the fire service is against this bill. We are watching it and as of now this bill is in the House Committee on Government Affairs. Please let us know if you have an opinion on this bill.

HB298 – Defines “Line of Duty” – This is a bill by Rep. Day to define line of duty. We did get to make some changes in this bill also that reflects both on and off duty and paid and volunteer. This bill is in the House Ways and Means Committee. This bill will also help with HB48 and the indemnification issue.

Rep. Steve Tumlin has agreed to sponsor the tax incentive bill; however he does feel it will be next session before it is considered due to the large number of bills already waiting to be considered. He has agreed to drop the bill this year.

There are a few other bills that we are watching that will not impact us if passed as they are, but could if changes are made to them. They have to do with the definition of commercial vehicles and another with licensing and permitting issues.

We are also continuing to work on other legislative issues that we need to get sponsored. These are the tax incentive, heart and lung, and job protection in the event of long term deployment to disasters and such.

If anyone has any suggestions for fire service legislation, please bring them to the Fire Service Joint Conference in September in Savannah.

Thanks for the support and we welcome all the help we can get. If you can come, bring somebody with you. If you can't come send somebody, and remember the color of the shirt doesn't matter to the legislators. A voter is a voter and that is what they see.

Joint Fire Service Legislative Committee:

Chipper Gardner – Spalding County – 770-228-2129 cgardner@spaldingcounty.com or gardnersc@juno.com

Don Floyd – Covington – 770-385-2100 - dfloyd@cityofcovington.org

Scott Carter – Cartersville – 770-387-5635 - scarter@cityofcartersville.org

Randy Windham – Warner Robbins – 478-971-4420 - rwindham@warner-robins.org

Mark Herendeen – Morrow – 770-961-4008 - chiefoffire@cityofmorrow.com

Gordon Henderson – Rome – 706-766-4260 - ghenderson@romeomega.us or gordondawn@bellsouth.net

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