

# HOUSE BILL 788

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CF SB 414

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By: **Delegates Rosenberg, Holmes, and Ziegler**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2023

Assigned to: Appropriations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting  
4 Within Maryland to study and make recommendations regarding the effectiveness  
5 and viability of certain incentives, offerings, or practices employed in other states to  
6 attract, support, and retain individuals in fire fighting roles; and generally relating  
7 to the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland.

8 Preamble

9 WHEREAS, The lives and property of Maryland residents and businesses are all  
10 protected and benefit greatly from strong and efficient fire, rescue, and emergency medical  
11 service response systems, coordinated at the county and community level across Maryland;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, The social and demographic makeup of communities has largely shifted,  
14 presenting both career and volunteer fire companies great difficulty in recruiting and  
15 retaining individuals for service; and

16 WHEREAS, Appropriate training standards for fire service in either a career or  
17 volunteer capacity are important but also create a meaningful barrier to new entrants into  
18 any fire fighting capacity; and

19 WHEREAS, A stark shortage of available recruits and on-duty firefighters have  
20 caused fire companies to call on volunteers who are well into ages 60 and 70 years old for  
21 primary response to fire calls; and

22 WHEREAS, Volunteer fire companies remain deeply embedded in many  
23 communities, serving as the primary fire fighting response across large parts of the State;  
24 and

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, Relatively metropolitan parts of the State rely on coordinated services  
2 from both career and volunteer firefighters to provide needed service coverage, but face  
3 strains in finding adequate participation at both levels; and

4 WHEREAS, Maryland and its local governments currently offer a variety of support  
5 incentives, staff benefits, and other compensation targeted to volunteer fire company  
6 members; and

7 WHEREAS, The recruitment and retention of both career and volunteer firefighters  
8 poses an urgent and high priority concern for Marylanders' safety and security in the short  
9 term and long term; now, therefore,

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
11 That:

12 (a) There is a Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within  
13 Maryland.

14 (b) The Commission consists of the following members:

15 (1) one representative of the Maryland Department of Labor, appointed by  
16 the Secretary of Labor;

17 (2) the Executive Director of the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute, or the  
18 Executive Director's designee;

19 (3) the Executive Director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency  
20 Medical Services Systems, or the Executive Director's designee;

21 (4) two representatives from the Maryland Municipal League, designated  
22 by the President of the Maryland Municipal League;

23 (5) two citizen representatives, designated by the President of the  
24 Maryland State Firemen's Association;

25 (6) two representatives from the Professional Firefighters of Maryland,  
26 designated by the President of the Professional Firefighters of Maryland;

27 (7) one representative from the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association,  
28 designated by the President of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association;

29 (8) one representative from the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association,  
30 designated by the President of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association; and

31 (9) the following members designated by the President of the Maryland  
32 Association of Counties:

1 (i) one county government representative with experience in county  
2 budgeting; and

3 (ii) one citizen representative.

4 (c) The members of the Commission shall elect a chair from among the  
5 Commission's members.

6 (d) The Maryland Department of Labor shall provide staff for the Commission.

7 (e) A member of the Commission:

8 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission; but

9 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State  
10 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

11 (f) The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding:

12 (1) the effectiveness and viability of uniform incentives, offerings, or  
13 practices employed in other states to attract, support, and retain individuals in fire fighting  
14 roles;

15 (2) the suitability of comparable or similar incentives, offerings, and  
16 practices as compared to the landscape of the State; and

17 (3) any other global issues the Commission may consider useful in  
18 enhancing and supporting career and volunteer fire fighting in the State.

19 (g) On or before December 1, 2023, the Commission shall report its findings and  
20 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State  
21 Government Article, the General Assembly.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
23 1, 2023. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June  
24 30, 2024, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be  
25 abrogated and of no further force and effect.