

HB 2611 -- FIREFIGHTER RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

SPONSOR: Richey

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Special Committee on Homeland Security by a vote of 6 to 3.

This bill provides that employees of fire departments in certain cities, as a condition of employment, cannot be subject to a residency requirement more restrictive than living within a one-hour response time.

Upon enactment, this provision would apply to the City of Kansas City.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this is similar to a bill the General Assembly passed last year for the police department. The sponsor has been contacted by fire fighters and EMS personnel who would like the restriction on residency requirements to apply to them as well. There are many reasons why an individual may not want to live in the same municipality that he or she works in: schools, custody arrangements, aging parents. Fire fighters don't want to have to choose between their families and their jobs.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Richey; and Anthony Marsalla.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that with a house fire or commercial building fire seconds matter which is why Kansas City instituted the residency requirement. The bill passed last year proved that the removing the residency requirement will not solve the employee shortage--they are still short a significant number of police officers. Opponents say that it should be up to the city to decide what restrictions to place on its employees.

Testifying against the bill were Susan Gibson; City of Kansas City; and Arnie C. Ac Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.