

HJR 134 -- FIRST RESPONDERS

SPONSOR: Burger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 14 to 2.

This resolution proposes to amend the Constitution by adding the offense of assault against a first responder, which a person commits if he or she attempts to kill or knowingly causes or attempts to cause serious physical injury to a first responder. "First responder" is defined in the resolution. The offense is a class A felony.

The resolution also proposes to add to the Missouri Constitution provisions related to line of duty deaths for first responders. As specified in the resolution, a claim for compensation for a first responder killed in the line of duty must be filed by survivors of the deceased with the Division of Workers' Compensation no later than one year from the date of the first responder's death. If the claim is made within the one-year time period, compensation will be paid if the Division finds the claimant to be entitled to compensation. The amount of compensation will be \$250,000 for any such death occurring after December 31, 2024. A \$20 surcharge will be assessed as costs in each court proceeding filed in any court in the State in all criminal cases, but the surcharge will not be collected in any proceeding in any court when the proceeding or the defendant has been dismissed by the court or when costs are to be paid by the State, county, or municipality. The surcharge will be deposited into the "Line of Duty Compensation Fund" or any other fund used solely for paying claims of first responders killed in the line of duty.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this has to do with first responders and it proposes to amend the Constitution to add that it is a class A felony if a person attempts to kill or injure a first responder. It also proposes to add language related to the line of duty compensation fund. They are putting this in the Constitution because it is the best funding mechanism even if the political winds change.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Burger; and the Ambulance District Association of Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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