

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



**FISCAL NOTE**

**HB 316 - SB 1442**

March 2, 2019

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Establishes a rebuttable presumption that any condition, impairment, or death caused by certain cancers experienced by full-time firefighters occurred in the line of duty, if certain conditions are met.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Increase State Expenditures -- \$50,000/FY19-20  
\$100,000/FY20-21  
\$150,000/FY21-22  
\$200,000/FY22-23  
\$250,000/FY23-24 and Subsequent Years**

**Increase Local Expenditures – Exceeds \$1,000,000 \***

Assumptions:

- The proposed legislation:
  - Applies only to regular, full-time firefighters who man a fire department which is recognized by the State Fire Marshall's office.
  - Presumes that any condition or impairment caused by all forms of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, colon cancer, skin cancer, or multiple myeloma cancer resulting from hospitalization, medical treatment, or any disability occurred in the course of employment unless the contrary is shown to be true.
  - Any such condition or impairment that results in death is presumed to be a loss of life in the line of duty unless the contrary is shown to be true.
  - Requires any firefighter desiring to utilize this presumption to have passed a pre-employment physical and annual physical thereafter which include a cancer screening that is negative.
  - Requires any such firefighter to have been exposed to heat, smoke, and certain substances while performing their duties and have completed five or more consecutive years of service with the applicable fire department.
  - Authorizes a firefighter to file a medical claim pertaining to any such condition or impairment up to five years after the most recent date of exposure.
- Tennessee Code Annotated § 7-51-205, enacted in 1991, established a rebuttable presumption for full-time firefighters employed by Davidson County for any condition

or impairment of health caused by disease or cancer. Firefighters are required to have successfully passed a physical examination which revealed no evidence of cancer prior to entering employment in order to claim benefits under this presumption.

- According to Davidson County:
  - The Nashville Fire Department (NFD) currently employs 1,143 full-time firefighters.
  - Since 1991 there have been approximately 218 cancer claims approved for full-time firefighters, or an average of 7.8 (218 per year / 28 years) per year.
  - Davidson County has paid approximately \$14,969,136 in medical costs associated with these 218 claims.
- On average, approximately 0.6 percent (7.8 per year / 1,143 firefighters) of firefighters employed by the NFD contract cancer annually.
- Based on information provided by the State Fire Marshall's Office there are:
  - Approximately 7,378 full-time firefighters employed by local governments.
  - Approximately 190 full-time firefighters employed by private, nonprofit corporations in Tennessee.
- Assuming the rate of cancer in Davidson County is representative of all other areas of the state, approximately 45 [(7,378 local firefighters + 190 private firefighters) x 0.6%] full-time firefighters in the state will contract cancer annually.
- Based on information provided by the Department of Health, in 2018 there were at least six persons who perished, listing their occupation as a firefighter, and whose cause of death was listed as cancer. The type of cancer is unknown.
- If the condition or impairment is determined to be caused by the cancers listed in the proposed legislation and judged to be contracted in the line-of-duty by way of the rebuttable presumption, and the firefighter subsequently dies of cancer, the estate of the firefighter will be entitled to receive a death benefit of \$50,000 per year for a period of five years, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 7-51-210.
- Assuming the estates of one full-time firefighter claims and is awarded the state death benefit per year, it will result in an increase in state expenditures of \$50,000 in FY19-20, \$100,000 (\$50,000 + \$50,000) in FY20-21, \$150,000 (\$100,000 + \$50,000) in FY21-22, \$200,000 (\$150,000 + \$50,000) FY22-23, and \$250,000 (\$200,000 + \$50,000) in FY23-24 and subsequent years.
- The extent of benefits which are currently provided to full-time firefighters by each local government is unknown; therefore, a precise recurring mandatory increase in local government expenditures for providing additional benefit coverage cannot be determined, but is reasonably estimated to exceed \$1,000,000 statewide.

## **IMPACT TO COMMERCE:**

**NOT SIGNIFICANT**

Assumptions:

- Based on information provided by the State Fire Marshall's Office, there are approximately 190 full-time firefighters employed by private, nonprofit corporations in Tennessee.
- It is estimated that approximately 1 (190 private firefighters x 0.6%) full-time firefighter working for a private nonprofit corporation will be eligible for benefits annually under the provisions of this legislation.
- Expenditures made by private nonprofits, if any, for payment of insurance premiums associated with benefits provided to such firefighters are not anticipated to increase a significant amount; therefore, the proposed language will not result in any significant impact to jobs or commerce in Tennessee.

*\*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

**CERTIFICATION:**

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

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