

**First Regular Session  
Seventieth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 15-0081.01 Nicole Myers x4326

**SENATE BILL 15-029**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

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**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Melton,** Court, Ginal

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**Senate Committees**

Finance  
Appropriations

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING A STUDY OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PENSION PLANS IN**  
102      **THE STATE.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://www.leg.state.co.us/billsummaries>.)*

**Police Officers' and Firefighters' Pension Reform Commission.**

The state auditor, in cooperation with the fire and police pension association (FPPA) and the department of local affairs (DOLA), is required to contract with a nationally recognized law firm with experience in federal tax law as it relates to public sector pension plans to study specified issues regarding the legal status of the volunteer firefighter

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

pension plans in the state. The law firm is required to deliver a report detailing the findings of the study to the state auditor, FPPA, DOLA, and the members of the police officers' and firefighters' pension reform commission of the state legislature (commission).

The bill requires the state auditor, FPPA, and DOLA, upon receipt of the report, to work collectively to develop recommendations for the legislature regarding changes to the system of volunteer firefighter pension plans based on the information contained in the report. In furtherance of developing the recommendations, the 3 entities are required to take into consideration several specified issues regarding volunteer firefighter pension plans in the state.

The bill requires the commission to meet as soon as practicable after receiving the report, but not less than 45 days after receiving the report, to hear a presentation of the report from a representative of the law firm and to hear a presentation from the state auditor's office, FPPA, and DOLA regarding recommendations for the volunteer firefighter pension plans in the state. The commission is required to discuss the presentations and determine whether to propose legislation relating to the funding and structure of the volunteer firefighter pension plans. The commission is required to ensure that relevant stakeholders and members of the public have an opportunity to provide input and comments on the findings of the report, the recommendations from the state auditor's office, FPPA, and DOLA, and on any legislation proposed by the commission.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 31-31-1002 as  
3 follows:

4 **31-31-1002. Volunteer firefighter pension plans study.** (1) THE  
5 STATE AUDITOR, WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE FIRE AND POLICE  
6 PENSION ASSOCIATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS, SHALL  
7 RETAIN A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LAW FIRM WITH EXPERIENCE IN  
8 FEDERAL TAX LAW AS IT RELATES TO PUBLIC SECTOR PENSION PLANS, AND  
9 AN ACTUARY IF NECESSARY, TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE ISSUES  
10 SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION. THE STATE AUDITOR SHALL  
11 ADMINISTER A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PROCESS AND SOLICIT  
12 INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY FIRMS WITH THE NECESSARY CREDENTIALS TO

1 BID FOR PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDY. IF, FOLLOWING GOOD FAITH  
2 EFFORTS, THE STATE AUDITOR, THE FIRE AND POLICE PENSION  
3 ASSOCIATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS DO NOT CONCUR  
4 REGARDING THE SELECTION OF THE FIRM, THE STATE AUDITOR SHALL  
5 RETAIN AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE FIRM PREFERRED BY THE  
6 STATE AUDITOR.

7 (2) (a) THE FIRM SELECTED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS  
8 SECTION SHALL STUDY THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

9 (I) WHETHER THE FEDERAL INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
10 RECOGNIZES VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS CREATED PURSUANT TO  
11 PARTS 11 AND 12 OF ARTICLE 30 OF THIS TITLE;

12 (II) IF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS CREATED PURSUANT TO  
13 PARTS 11 AND 12 OF ARTICLE 30 OF THIS TITLE ARE NOT RECOGNIZED BY  
14 THE FEDERAL INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE, HOW SUCH PLANS CAN BE  
15 BROUGHT INTO COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW;

16 (III) WHETHER VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS HAVE PROVIDED  
17 BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEERS IN EXCESS OF WHAT IS ALLOWED TO BE PAID TO  
18 VOLUNTEERS PURSUANT TO THE FEDERAL INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, THE  
19 BUREAU OF LABOR STANDARDS, AND ANY OTHER APPLICABLE FEDERAL  
20 LAW;

21 (IV) ALTERNATIVES TO MAINTAINING SEPARATE LOCAL  
22 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS AS THEY ARE CURRENTLY STRUCTURED  
23 IN THE STATE, INCLUDING BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF SUCH  
24 ALTERNATIVES; AND

25 (V) ANY OTHER ISSUES OR QUESTIONS DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE  
26 STATE AUDITOR, THE FIRE AND POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION, OR THE  
27 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS.

1 (b) THE LAW FIRM SELECTED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1) OF  
2 THIS SECTION SHALL DELIVER A REPORT DETAILING THE FINDINGS OF THE  
3 STUDY TO THE STATE AUDITOR, THE LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE, THE  
4 FIRE AND POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL  
5 AFFAIRS, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE POLICE OFFICERS' AND FIREFIGHTERS'  
6 PENSION REFORM COMMISSION.

7 (3) UPON RECEIPT OF THE REPORT REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF  
8 THIS SECTION, THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE, THE FIRE AND POLICE  
9 PENSION ASSOCIATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS SHALL  
10 WORK COLLECTIVELY TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE  
11 LEGISLATURE REGARDING CHANGES TO THE SYSTEM OF VOLUNTEER  
12 FIREFIGHTER PENSION PLANS BASED ON THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN  
13 THE REPORT. IN FURTHERANCE OF DEVELOPING THE RECOMMENDATIONS,  
14 THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE, THE FIRE AND POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION,  
15 AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS SHALL CONSIDER THE  
16 FOLLOWING:

17 (a) WHETHER THE STATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER  
18 FIREFIGHTER PLANS SHOULD BE BASED ON A PLAN'S NEED FOR ADDITIONAL  
19 FUNDING OR WHETHER FULLY FUNDED PLANS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE  
20 ELIGIBLE FOR STATE ASSISTANCE;

21 (b) WHETHER THE STATE SHOULD AMEND CURRENT LAW TO  
22 ALLOW THE AWARD OF MATCHING GRANTS TO LENGTH OF SERVICE PLANS;

23 (c) WHETHER THE STATE SHOULD REQUIRE BY LAW THAT  
24 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS UNDERGO PERIODIC ACTUARIAL  
25 VALUATIONS;

26 (d) WHETHER THE STATE SHOULD REQUIRE BY LAW THAT  
27 VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO VOLUNTEER

1 FIREFIGHTER PLANS;

2 (e) WHETHER THE STATE SHOULD DEVELOP A PROCESS TO CLOSE  
3 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS OR TO CONVERT PLANS INTO AN  
4 ALTERNATE BENEFIT, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY FOR ANNUITIES, LUMP  
5 SUM PAYMENTS, OR A DEFINED CONTRIBUTION STYLE PLAN;

6 (f) THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH SEPARATE  
7 LOCAL VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PLANS, INCLUDING:

8 (I) THE COSTS INCURRED IN ADMINISTERING SEPARATE LOCAL  
9 PLANS WITH THE INCREASED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE  
10 GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD;

11 (II) THE DIFFICULTIES OF COORDINATING BENEFITS BETWEEN  
12 VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS WHEN A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER HAS  
13 WORKED AT MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS; AND

14 (III) THE BURDENS OF TRACKING BENEFICIARIES OF LOCAL  
15 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PENSION PLANS, COMPLYING WITH REGULATORY  
16 REQUIREMENTS, MAINTAINING A LOCAL PENSION BOARD, AND  
17 MAINTAINING RECORDS REGARDING SERVICE ELIGIBILITY;

18 (g) WHETHER VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND VOLUNTEER FIRE  
19 DEPARTMENTS ARE BEST SERVED BY A PENSION SYSTEM THAT REQUIRES  
20 VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE FOR TEN TO TWENTY YEARS TO RECEIVE A  
21 BENEFIT AT AGE FIFTY;

22 (h) IF A COST-SHARING MULTI-EMPLOYER PLAN, WHETHER DEFINED  
23 CONTRIBUTION OR DEFINED BENEFIT, WOULD FUNCTION MORE EFFICIENTLY  
24 THAN INDIVIDUAL LOCAL PLANS;

25 (i) WHETHER THE FIRE AND POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION SHOULD  
26 BE AUTHORIZED OR DIRECTED TO ADMINISTER A PLAN OTHER THAN THE  
27 CURRENT LOCAL DEFINED BENEFIT PLAN FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS;

1 AND

2 (j) ANY OTHER ISSUES DEEMED RELEVANT BY THE STATE  
3 AUDITOR'S OFFICE, THE FIRE AND POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION, AND THE  
4 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS.

5 (4) THE STATE AUDITOR MAY REQUEST INFORMATION AS  
6 NECESSARY FROM VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND FROM THE FIRE  
7 AND POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION REGARDING THE MEMBERSHIP,  
8 BENEFITS, AND STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PENSION  
9 PLANS. VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND THE FIRE AND POLICE  
10 PENSION ASSOCIATION SHALL PROVIDE THE REQUESTED INFORMATION.

11 (5) (a) AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AFTER THE RECEIPT OF THE  
12 REPORT REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION, BUT NOT LESS  
13 THAN FORTY-FIVE DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REPORT, THE POLICE  
14 OFFICERS' AND FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION REFORM COMMISSION SHALL MEET  
15 TO HEAR A PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF  
16 THE LAW FIRM SELECTED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION.  
17 DURING THE SAME MEETING, THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE, THE FIRE AND  
18 POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS  
19 SHALL MAKE A PRESENTATION TO THE COMMISSION WITH ITS  
20 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE REPORT AND  
21 THE ISSUES SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

22 (b) THE POLICE OFFICERS' AND FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION REFORM  
23 COMMISSION SHALL, EITHER AT THE MEETING SPECIFIED IN PARAGRAPH (a)  
24 OF THIS SUBSECTION (5) OR AT AN ADDITIONAL MEETING AS DEEMED  
25 NECESSARY BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, DISCUSS THE  
26 PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMISSION AND DETERMINE WHETHER TO  
27 PROPOSE LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE FUNDING AND STRUCTURE OF

1 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER PENSION PLANS IN THE STATE. THE COMMISSION  
2 SHALL ENSURE THAT RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS AND MEMBERS OF THE  
3 PUBLIC HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE FINDINGS OF  
4 THE REPORT REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION, THE  
5 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE, THE FIRE AND  
6 POLICE PENSION ASSOCIATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS  
7 REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION, AND ON ANY LEGISLATION  
8 PROPOSED BY THE COMMISSION.

9 **SECTION 2. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,  
10 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
11 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.