



Substitute House Bill No. 5483

Public Act No. 24-136

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND TRANSFERRING VARIOUS FUNCTIONS TO A DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION, REVISING THE POWERS AND COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 29-1b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) There shall be within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection a Division of State Police. The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall serve as administrative head and commanding officer of the State Police Division. As administrative head, said commanding officer of the Division of State Police shall delegate said commanding officer's jurisdiction of the affairs of the Division of State Police to a deputy commissioner who shall have the powers and privileges conferred by statute upon a state policeman.

(b) There shall be within said department a Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. The commissioner shall serve as administrative head of said division. As administrative head, said commissioner shall delegate said commissioner's jurisdiction of the

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to a deputy commissioner. The deputy commissioner shall possess professional training and knowledge consisting of not less than five years of managerial or strategic planning experience in matters relating to public safety, security, emergency services and emergency response. No person possessing a record of any criminal, unlawful or unethical conduct shall be eligible for or hold such position. Any person with any present or past political activities or financial interests that may substantially conflict with the duties of the deputy commissioner or expose such person to potential undue influence or compromise such person's ability to be entrusted with necessary state or federal security clearances or information shall be deemed unqualified for such position and shall not be eligible to hold such position.

(c) (1) There shall be within said department a Division of Fire Services Administration. The State Fire Administrator shall be the administrative head of said division.

(2) The functions, powers, duties and personnel of the former Office of State Fire Administration shall be transferred to the Division of Fire Services Administration pursuant to the provisions of sections 4-38d and 4-39.

(3) The Division of Fire Services Administration shall constitute the successor to the Office of State Fire Administration in accordance with the provisions of sections 4-38d, 4-38e and 4-39. Wherever the words "Office of State Fire Administration" are used in the general statutes, the words "Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection" shall be substituted in lieu thereof. Any order or regulation of the former Office of State Fire Administration that is in force on the effective date of this section shall continue in force and effect as an order or regulation of the Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection until amended, repealed or superseded

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

pursuant to law.

Sec. 2. Section 7-323k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) There is established a Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. [to] Until June 30, 2025, the commission shall consist of twelve members appointed by the Governor. The State Fire Marshal or his or her designee and the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities or his or her designee shall serve as ex-officio, voting members of said commission. Of the twelve members appointed by the Governor, two shall represent The Connecticut State Firefighter's Association, two shall represent the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, two shall represent the Uniformed Professional Firefighters of the International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO, two shall represent the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association, two shall represent the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association and two shall represent the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. The term of any member appointed pursuant to this subdivision shall end on June 30, 2025.

(2) On and after July 1, 2025, the commission shall consist of the following members:

(A) Two members of The Connecticut State Firefighter's Association, one of whom is the chairperson of the association's education committee, appointed by the Governor;

(B) Two members of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, appointed by the Governor;

(C) Two members of the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs' Association, appointed by the Governor;

(D) Two members of the Uniformed Professional Firefighters of the

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO, appointed by the Governor;

(E) Two members of the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association, appointed by the Governor;

(F) Two members of the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association, appointed by the Governor;

(G) A representative of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns, appointed by the Governor;

(H) A representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, appointed by the Governor;

(I) A representative of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns, appointed by the House chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security;

(J) A representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, appointed by the Senate chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security;

(K) A member of the Connecticut Fire Equipment Mechanics Association, appointed by the House ranking member of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security;

(L) A representative of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board, appointed by the Senate ranking member of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security;

(M) The State Fire Marshal, who shall be a nonvoting member;

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

(N) The forest protection supervisor within the Forestry Division of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, or such supervisor's designee, who shall be a nonvoting member; and

(O) The commanding officer of the Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit of the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, or such officer's designee, who shall be a nonvoting member.

(b) On or before July fifteenth, annually, each organization to be represented on said commission shall submit to the [Governor] appropriate appointing authority a list of nominees for appointment to said commission, which list the [Governor] appointing authority may use when making appointments to said commission. [On or before September 1, 1975, the Governor shall appoint eight members of said commission to serve for a term of three years and on or before September 1, 1976, he shall appoint four members for a term of one year. Thereafter he] Appointing authorities shall appoint members to said commission [, to replace those whose terms have expired,] to serve for three years, or until a successor is appointed. Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the appointing authority for the unexpired portion of the term. Persons appointed to said commission shall be qualified, by experience or education, in the fields of fire protection, fire prevention, fire suppression, fire fighting and related fields.

(c) The commission shall meet at such times and at such places as it deems proper. [Said] On and before June 30, 2025, the commission shall elect from its membership a [chairman, vice chairman] chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary who shall serve a one year term commencing on October first of the year in which they are elected, provided such terms shall expire on June 30, 2025, and nothing contained herein shall prevent their reelection to such office. On and after July 1, 2025, the Governor shall appoint the chairperson of the commission from the

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

commission's membership, and the commission shall elect from its membership a vice chairperson and secretary, who shall serve one year terms, provided nothing contained herein shall prevent their reelection to such office. No member of said commission shall receive compensation for such member's services.

(d) Members of the commission shall not be considered as holding public office solely by virtue of their membership on said commission.

(e) On and after July 1, 2025, the members of the education committee of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association, Inc., shall serve as a subcommittee of the commission on matters relating to fire schools.

~~[(e)]~~ (f) The commission shall be within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

Sec. 3. Section 7-323*l* of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) The commission shall:

(1) Recommend minimum standards of education and physical condition [required of each candidate] for candidates for any firefighter position;

(2) Establish standards for [a] fire service training and education [program, on a voluntary basis] programs, and develop and conduct an examination program to certify those fire service personnel who satisfactorily demonstrate their ability to meet the requirements of the fire service training and education program standards;

(3) Establish an optional fire service training and education program in the handling of incidents, such as wandering, that involve juveniles and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment or nonverbal learning disorder, provided the curriculum for such

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

techniques is made available at no cost from (A) institutions of higher education, health care professionals or advocacy organizations that are concerned with juveniles and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment or nonverbal learning disorder, or (B) collaborations of such institutions, professionals or organizations;

(4) Conduct fire fighting training and education programs designed to assist firefighters in developing and maintaining their skills and keeping abreast of technological advances in fire suppression, fire protection, fire prevention and related fields;

(5) Recommend standards for promotion to the various ranks of fire departments;

(6) Be authorized, with the approval of the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, to apply for, receive and distribute any state, federal or private funds or contributions available for training and education of fire fighting personnel;

(7) Recommend that the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection approve or reject the establishment of, or, when appropriate, suspend or revoke the approval of, regional fire schools in accordance with section 7-323u; [and]

(8) Advise the Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection on the management of the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan;

(9) Implement the recommendations of the study of the fire service authorized pursuant to subdivision (36) of subsection (b) of section 41 of public act 23-204; and

[(8)] (10) Submit to the Governor, the [Joint Legislative Management Committee of the General Assembly] joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

and security, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, and the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection an annual report (A) relating to the activities, recommendations and accomplishments of the commission, and (B) making recommendations on the funding necessary for the operation of, the maintenance of and capital improvements to the state fire school and regional fire schools.

(b) The commission may recommend, and the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection may adopt, regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 as necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

Sec. 4. Section 7-323n of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

[There is established an Office of State Fire Administration, which office] The Division of State Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall: [(a)] (1) Carry out the provisions of this part; [(b)] (2) administer the state's responsibilities under federal laws relevant to fire service; [(c)] (3) develop a master plan for fire prevention and control; and [(d)] (4) carry out any other function which the commission may devise. [Subject to the provisions of chapter 67, the commission may appoint such clerical and other assistants as it may deem necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.]

Sec. 5. Section 7-323o of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) There is established the position of State Fire Administrator. [who] Prior to July 1, 2025, the State Fire Administrator shall be recommended by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and be appointed by the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection. [and who] Upon a vacancy in the position of State Fire Administrator

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

occurring on or after July 1, 2025, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control may recommend candidates for the position of State Fire Administrator to the commissioner, and the commissioner shall appoint such State Fire Administrator, who shall be qualified for the position by at least five years of experience in the fire service.

(b) The Division of Fire Services Administration shall:

[(1) Carry out the requirements of section 7-323n; (2) administer]

(1) Administer federal funds and grants allocated to the fire services of the state; [(3) provide]

(2) Provide technical assistance and guidance to fire fighting forces of any state or municipal agency; [(4) develop]

(3) Develop a centralized information and audiovisual library regarding fire prevention and control; [(5) accumulate]

(4) Accumulate, disseminate and analyze fire prevention data; [(6) recommend]

(5) Recommend specifications of fire service materials and equipment and assist in the purchasing thereof; [(7) assist]

(6) Assist in mutual aid coordination; [(8) coordinate]

(7) Coordinate fire programs with those of the other states; [(9) assist]

(8) Assist in communications coordination; [(10) establish]

(9) Establish and maintain a fire service information program; [and (11) review]

(10) Review and approve the purchase of fire apparatus or equipment at state institutions, facilities and properties; [and, on and after July 1, 1985, coordinate the training and education of fire service personnel at

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

such institutions, facilities and properties.]

(11) Recommend and provide reports on revisions to statutes relating to firefighter training and fire prevention and control;

(12) Advise and assist the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control regarding legislative proposals;

(13) Encourage the expansion and improvement of existing regional firefighter training facilities in cooperation with the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control;

(14) Administer the state fire school and regional fire schools;

(15) Administer certification examinations, testing procedures and reciprocity recognition for credentials in the fire service disciplines;

(16) Manage the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan, with the advice of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control; and

(17) Make recommendations to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection pertaining to the operational funding of the state fire school and regional fire schools.

(c) The provisions of this section shall not be construed to apply to forest fire prevention and control programs administered by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection pursuant to sections 23-33 to 23-57, inclusive.

Sec. 6. Section 7-313m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) Not later than January 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the chief of a volunteer fire department for a distressed municipality, as defined in section 32-9p, shall submit to the [State Fire Administrator] Division

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection a report on the yearly average of the number of volunteer firefighters from such municipality's volunteer fire department who enrolled in Firefighter I certification and recruit training based on the preceding four years, except the year commencing January 1, 2020, shall not be included in any such four preceding years for purposes of calculating such average.

(b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, and each fiscal year thereafter, the [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration shall award a grant to any distressed municipality with a volunteer fire department for the purposes of covering costs related to the provision of Firefighter I certification and recruit training for volunteer firefighters at regional fire schools. The amount of such grant award for each such distressed municipality shall be equal to the product of (1) the average cost of a Firefighter I certification and recruit training program at a regional fire school, and (2) the average number of volunteer firefighters from such distressed municipality's volunteer fire department who enrolled at a regional fire school for such certification and training.

(c) Not later than February 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies a report on the (1) reports submitted by the chiefs of volunteer fire departments of distressed municipalities pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and (2) average cost of a Firefighter I certification and recruit training program at a regional fire school.

Sec. 7. Section 7-323s of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

(a) The [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, within available appropriations, shall develop model guidelines, on or before January 1, 2007, to be used by municipalities with paid municipal emergency personnel and municipalities with volunteer emergency personnel in entering into agreements authorizing volunteer emergency personnel to serve during personal time.

(b) A municipality with paid municipal emergency personnel and a municipality with volunteer emergency personnel may enter into an agreement authorizing paid emergency personnel to serve during personal time as active members of a volunteer fire department in the municipality in which they reside. In developing such agreements, such municipalities shall consider the model guidelines developed by the [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

(c) The municipalities that are parties to an agreement entered into under subsection (b) of this section may request the Labor Commissioner to provide assistance, within available appropriations, in resolving such issues arising out of the agreement as the commissioner deems appropriate.

Sec. 8. Section 7-323v of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) The [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall, within available appropriations, pay five hundred dollars to each volunteer fire company for each call to which it responds on (1) a limited access highway, designated pursuant to section 13b-27, (2) the section of the highway known as the Berlin Turnpike, which begins at the end of the existing Wilbur Cross Parkway

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

in the town of Meriden and extends northerly along Route 15 to the beginning of a section of limited access highway in the town of Wethersfield known as South Meadows Expressway, or (3) the section of Route 8 in the town of Beacon Falls which is within the boundaries of the Naugatuck State Forest.

(b) No municipality that provides funds to a volunteer fire company may reduce such funding based on the payments that such company receives, or is anticipated to receive, under subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Any regional fire school may receive and use federal, state or private funds or contributions for the facilities and operations of such school.

Sec. 10. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working group to make recommendations regarding the structure and operations of the Office of State Fire Marshal and the Office of Education and Data Management within the Department of Administrative Services in order to effectively administer code development, code enforcement, fire prevention and fire investigation functions.

(b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

(1) The chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security, or their designees;

(2) The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, or the commissioner's designee;

(3) The Commissioner of Administrative Services, or the commissioner's designee;

(4) The head of the Office of Education and Data Management within the Department of Administrative Services; and

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

(5) A representative of the Connecticut State Fire Marshals Association, who shall be appointed by the chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security.

(c) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not later than July 1, 2024. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(d) The working group shall select a chairperson from among its members. Such chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the working group, which shall be held not later than August 1, 2024.

(e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

(f) Not later than January 1, 2025, the working group shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety and security, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2025, whichever is later.

Sec. 11. Section 7-323j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

As used in this part, "commission" means the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control; "municipality" means town, city, consolidated town and city, consolidated town and borough, borough, school district, fire district, fire and sewer district, sewer district, lighting district or any other municipal corporation or taxing district upon which is placed the duty of, or which has itself assumed the duty of, protecting its inhabitants from loss by fire; "fire fighting duties" means and includes

Substitute House Bill No. 5483

duties performed in connection with the suppression and prevention of fires, fire training and rescue, fire investigation, arson investigation, details and assignments to protect the public safety against fire and other related work; "firefighters" means any person who is regularly employed and paid by any municipality or by a contractor which is a nonprofit corporation for the purpose of performing fire fighting duties for a municipality on an average of not less than thirty-five hours per week or any volunteer who performs fire fighting duties. [and who elects to cooperate with the commission in accordance with section 7-323m.]

Sec. 12. Section 7-323m of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2025*)