

HOUSE BILL 298

By Hill M

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 5, Chapter 17 and Title 8, relative to volunteer fire departments.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 5, Chapter 17, is amended by adding the following as a new part:

**5-17-201.**

(a) A county legislative body may employ up to two (2) full-time, paid firefighters to staff each volunteer fire department station within the county.

(b) The employment of firefighters under subsection (a) does not form a county-wide fire department under title 5, chapter 17, part 1.

**5-17-202.**

(a) A firefighter employed by a county legislative body pursuant to § 5-17-201 is a county employee for all purposes, except for the provision of health and retirement benefits.

(b) A firefighter employed pursuant to this part is eligible for coverage under the group insurance plan established under § 8-27-202. The state shall pay the employer portion of any premiums under the group insurance plan.

(c) A firefighter employed pursuant to this part is eligible to participate in the Tennessee consolidated retirement system. Notwithstanding § 8-35-201(a)(3), the state shall pay the entire employer contribution.

**5-17-203.**

Persons employed pursuant to this part must be certified as a firefighter by the commission on firefighting personnel standards and education prior to employment with the county.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019, the public welfare requiring it.