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FLOOR DEBATE

March 28, 2001      LB 808

an active volunteer, not just a name on a roster, money will be set aside on an annual basis and invested on behalf of the volunteer. An amendment to the IRS code adopted for these sorts of programs deferred taxation of these funds until a volunteer reached the retirement age. While the sum of money involved were small, in a range of \$100 to \$250 per year, with prudent investment over a career life, the sum available at retirement might range as high as from 10 to 20 thousand dollars. The basic idea was to give a young person one reason to get involved as a volunteer, and give the volunteer who is starting to feel burnout one more reason to stay on the job and stick with the program. A little history on the...this area. The Volunteer Emergency Responders Recruitment and Retention Act was passed by the Legislature, this Legislature, for the first time in 1998 and LB 1290...as LB 1293, but was vetoed by the Governor after the Legislature adjourned sine die. It was reintroduced in 1998 as LB 849, was advanced from committee, and then amended on Select File. Because of state funding involved, the Public Employee Retirement Board was given the responsibility for administering the funds of a local program, and the State Investment Officer was given responsibility for investing and protecting the funds. The portion of the bill authorizing state funding was deleted to prevent an anticipated veto by the Governor. The bill was then passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. And the Urban Affairs Committee undertook a study of how to fund the bill during the 1999 interim. From the result of that study, the Urban Affairs Committee introduced LB 1370 in the 19...or, the 2000 session, specifying the use of several different revenue sources to meet the program requirements for at least five...the first few years. The bill advanced from committee, was declared an urgent...Urban Affairs Committee priority bill, was never voted on by the full Legislature, and died at the end of the session. The current situation, we have arrived at the point where we have to face the facts, at least for now. Significant state funding will not be available. Therefore, the committee decided to introduce a bill which removes any state government role from the act. With the passage of this bill, the local programs become purely local. The state neither administers nor funds the local programs. Because of the current form of the Volunteer Emergency Responders Recruitment and Retention Act,