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FLOOR DEBATE

April 16, 2002 LB 1185, 1194

by workers' compensation while traveling from anyplace to the fire station or scene of the fire. And then taking a quote out of the floor debate, Senator Stalder said, this bill simply provides an extension of the workers' compensation law that covers the firemen from the time the whistle blows, rather than from the time that they reach the scene of the fire. The law is presently interpreted to say that they are not covered until they reach the fire station or the scene of the fire. Now we requested an Attorney General's Opinion on the current language in September of 1999 to see whether legislation was actually needed to clarify when a volunteer firefighter is covered for workers' compensation. Their response said that additional language was a viable option, but probably unnecessary where a simple inquiry into the legislative history reveals its intended meaning. Well, obviously, certain insurance companies have refused to look at the intended meaning, and since these cases are still being denied because of so-called ambiguity, we feel that this language of the AM3740 and the prior bill, LB 1194, is necessary for volunteers to be covered in the event that they are injured. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Hudkins. Senator Chambers, you're recognized to speak.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President, members of the Legislature, I support this amendment. The difficulty is that, as Senator Hudkins pointed out, some insurance companies do not want to accept the plain, clear meaning of the present language in the statute. We went all through that during the hearing. She substituted language. The insurance people looked at it, didn't like that. So this is language with which they have agreed, but since we're compiling a record, I'd like to ask Senator Hudkins a question.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Hudkins.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Hudkins, is it correct that this is language with which the insurance companies have agreed?