



Hundredth Legislature - Second Session - 2008
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 1096

Chairperson: Mike Friend
Committee: Urban Affairs
Date of Hearing: February 5, 2008

The following constitute the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

This legislation proposes to continue the search for a resolution to the public safety issues raised by LB 607 in the 2007 legislative session.

LB 1096 is divided into two parts. Sections 1, 2, and 3 deal with the proposed requirement that first class cities with a population in excess of twenty thousand people be required to hire a career fire chief and that basic data on volunteer performance be gathered by the chief and annually reported to the city council with a public hearing held on the report. The intent is to facilitate the local dialogue on a paid fire department by gathering basic data and requiring an annual public hearing and discussion of the issue.

The second part of the bill, found in section 4, proposes to amend section 35-901 to require volunteer fire departments with trust funds which experience financial activity in excess of fifty thousand dollars annually to report that fact to the city, village, or fire protection district they serve and would authorize those subdivisions to audit the trust fund books.

This bill only mandates the hiring of a career fire chief with appropriate training, credentials, and experience to have the immediate superintendence of the city's emergency response equipment and services. It does not require the creation of a paid department but rather establishes a process to gather the necessary information to enable the decision to be made locally.

Furthermore, it does not require an audit of volunteer fire department trust funds: it merely authorizes the city, village, or fire protection district which is served by the department to review trust fund books when the level of financial activity exceeds fifty thousand dollars in a given year.

The bill does not make trust fund money "public funds" nor does it empower the city to direct expenditures from the fund or expend funds on its own account.

Principal Introducer: _____
Senator Mike Friend