

well as volunteer employees. Was brought to me by the Millard Suburban Fire District because of a lawsuit that was brought against them that challenged the existing statutes, and at the very least we found a lot of ambiguities in the statute as to whether you could, indeed, pay or not pay volunteer fire department employees or volunteers. The E clause has been attached to the bill. Because of the lawsuit there is a temporary restraining situation going on in the Millard area. This does affect the entire state. If you look at the committee statement, you'll see that we had wide support from all across the state from volunteers and fire fighters in general. One final thing that the bill does do is add that...developed the rescue as well as fire protection, rescue protection statutes are changed to allow for paid employees there as well. One final thing I'd like to say is that there was some concern in hearing by some of the proponents that were talking about the bill in support of the bill, but they were in, some ways, implying that maybe volunteer fire departments weren't doing a very good job, and that was never the intent of the bill, or that they weren't doing an adequate job. That wasn't the intent. I'd like to say for the record that the volunteer fire districts have been a very, very valuable service for the State of Nebraska and continues to be. This just augments it a little further and allows some districts, if they wish, to have a combination of volunteer and paid fire fighters. I would move for the advancement of LB 918.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Schellpeper, please.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I'd like to ask Senator Hannibal a question.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hannibal, will you respond, please.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Yes.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Does this bill make it so that they have to pay, or is it voluntary if they want to pay the small rural fire departments?

SENATOR HANNIBAL: This is a permissive bill, allows for you to have all volunteers, all paid, or a combination.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: What about, are there any other benefits that they can pay?