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FLOOR DEBATE

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it's been. I can't really speak to how well, I guess, the...or how much the firefighters really enjoy and partake in it. But I can certainly get some of that information for you, if you'd like.

SENATOR BOURNE: Do you know when the bill was originally passed?

SENATOR FRIEND: In 1999, Senator Bourne.

SENATOR BOURNE: Okay. All right. And the money...so it's designed to do is recruit and perhaps provide some payment to the volunteer firefighters?

SENATOR FRIEND: I believe that that was...yes, I believe that that was one of the original, I guess part of...a purview of the original bill that they're looking at. I wouldn't say enticements, but the ability for some of these communities to offer some...yeah, I would say some enhancement to what they're trying to accomplish in those areas.

SENATOR BOURNE: And is it done in the guise of retirement pay? Because I read the bill and there's some language in here regarding vesting. So is it money that's up-front to entice...and "entice" is not a negative word, in my mind. Is it money up-front to entice individuals to become a part of the volunteer firefighter department, and then they get this upon retirement age?

SENATOR FRIEND: Well, Senator Bourne, I think you said it best, in the guise of a retirement plan. It's not the...it's not a, like you and I would get...well, actually we don't get retirement pay, do we? (Laugh) It would be...it would not be in the normal mode that you would expect a...from a collective bargaining agreement from a particular municipality that they would provide for their firefighters. So I think the point of your question, yeah. I mean, it's a tool, I think, and it's been used as a tool, but I don't think that's all it's for. I think it is something that can be seen as doing what's right for those firefighters, for the folks that are, you know, so...