

SB 728 -5 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Tax Expenditures

Meeting Dates: 1/26, 2/9, 2/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes an income tax credit for qualifying volunteer firefighters of up to \$1,000 per tax year. Applies to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2024, and before January 1m 2030. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Important role played by volunteer firefighters in Oregon
- Factors affecting the ability to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters
- Time commitment required to be volunteer firefighter
- Similar tax credits for other types of first responders

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-5 Clarifies that qualification for tax credit requires certification by Department of Public Safety Standards and Training as a fire service professional plus one other from listed options.

FIS: minimal fiscal impact on measure w/-5 amendment

RIS: "revenue lite" statement issued on measure w/-5 amendment

BACKGROUND:

According to numbers provided by the State Fire Marshal, roughly 60 percent of Oregon's firefighters serve in a volunteer capacity, compared to 40 percent career firefighters. Nearly two-thirds of volunteer firefighters serve in fire protection districts, many of them rural districts, while about two-thirds of career firefighters serve in fire departments.

Senate Bill 728 creates a tax credit for eligible Oregon volunteer firefighters. To qualify, a firefighter must provide volunteer service to a fire department, fire protection district, or municipal corporation and meet at least two additional qualifiers: related to number of calls taken, training hours, certification, or community engagement. Firefighters who already claim a similar tax credit for volunteer emergency medical services providers may not also qualify for the volunteer firefighter tax credit during the same year.