

SESSION OF 2017

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2137

As Amended by Senate Committee on Ethics,
Elections and Local Government

Brief*

HB 2137 would allow any county commissioner or member of a city governing body to serve as an emergency medical service volunteer, ambulance service volunteer, or volunteer fire fighter, but would prohibit those officials from receiving any sort of compensation or remuneration for these volunteer activities.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Local Government at the request of Representative Rahjes. In the House Committee hearing, Representative Rahjes, in addition to representatives of the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services, Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association, and Kansas State Firefighters Association, testified in favor of the bill. The proponents stated communities in Kansas struggle to keep enough volunteers to ensure first responder services are staffed when needed, and in many instances those serving as elected officials also volunteer with emergency service organizations. Representative Rahjes and others also mentioned Attorney General Opinion 2016-12, which stated the common law doctrine of incompatibility of offices precludes an individual from serving as a county commissioner and a volunteer emergency medical technician in the same county.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

Written-only neutral testimony was provided by the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM).

No other testimony was provided.

The Executive Director of the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services and a representative of the Kansas State Firefighters Association provided proponent testimony in the Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections and Local Government hearing. A representative of the LKM provided neutral testimony. No opponents testified.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to prohibit county commissioner and city governing body member volunteers from receiving any sort of compensation or remuneration for their volunteer service.

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill as introduced, the LKM states the bill could increase costs for cities that begin compensating volunteers who serve on governing bodies if they currently are not doing so. The fiscal note also states Kansas counties would be affected similarly. Any costs associated with enactment of the bill would be negligible. No revised fiscal note was available at the time of the Senate Committee action.