SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION
No. 23

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
217th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 8, 2016

Sponsored by:
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District 18 (Middlesex)
Assemblyman CRAIG J. COUGHLIN
District 19 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senators Beck, Greenstein and Assemblyman Space

SYNOPSIS
Establishes task force to study and make recommendations concerning stabilization and growth of volunteer first responder community.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/9/2018)
A JOINT RESOLUTION establishing a task force to study and make recommendations concerning the stabilization and growth of volunteer first responders.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. There is hereby created a task force to be known as the “Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment.” The task force shall study and make recommendations for short-term and long-term strategies, incentives, and policies for the retention and recruitment of volunteer first responders to ensure the State’s volunteer first responder ranks stabilize and grow in order to be able to adequately service the communities in this State. Specifically, the task force’s charge shall include, but not be limited to, the evaluation of incentives, training and recertification requirements, and the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for volunteer first responders.

   b. The task force shall consist of 15 members as follows:

   (1) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;

   (2) the Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services in the Department of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;

   (3) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;

   (4) a representative of the New Jersey State First Aid Council, appointed by the President of the Senate;

   (5) a representative of the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association who is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the President of the Senate;

   (6) a representative of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

   (7) a representative of the New Jersey Association of Counties, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

   (8) two public members who are volunteer first responders, appointed by the President of the Senate;

   (9) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

   (10) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

   (11) two members of the Senate, who shall not be from the same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate; and

   (12) two members of the General Assembly, who shall not be from the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

   c. All appointments to the task force shall be made within 90 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies shall be filled in...
the same manner as the original appointments. The task force shall select a chairperson from among the members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed, within the limits of funds made available to the task force, for necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

d. The chairperson shall call an initial meeting of the task force within 30 days of the appointment of its members and hold hearings at the times and in the places it may deem appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. The chairperson shall hold at least one public hearing in each of the north, central, and southern regions of the State to meet with local volunteer first responders and solicit their input regarding recommendations for retaining and recruiting volunteers.

e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and may be available to it for its purposes.

f. A report of the task force’s findings and recommendations shall be submitted to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the General Assembly no later than 12 months following the date of the task force’s initial meeting.

2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon submission of the task force’s final report to the Governor and Legislature.

STATEMENT

This joint resolution establishes a “Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment” to study and make recommendations for strategies, incentives, and policies for the retention and recruitment of the State’s volunteer first responders to ensure their ranks stabilize and grow in order to be able to adequately service the communities in this State.

Specifically, the task force’s charge is to include, but not be limited to, the evaluation of incentives, training and recertification requirements, and the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for volunteer first responders.

The 15-member task force would be comprised of the following members: (1) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who is to serve ex-officio; (2) the Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services in the Department of Health or a designee, who is to serve ex-officio; (3) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs or a designee, who is to
serve ex-officio; (4) a representative of the New Jersey State First Aid Council, appointed by the President of the Senate; (5) a representative of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association who is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the President of the Senate; (6) a representative of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (7) a representative of the New Jersey Association of Counties, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (8) two public members who are volunteer first responders, appointed by the President of the Senate; (9) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (10) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (11) two members of the Senate, who shall not be from the same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate; and (12) two members of the General Assembly, who shall not be from the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

The bill requires the task force appointments to be made within 90 days of the bill’s effective date. The committee is to select a chairperson from among its members and the chairperson is required to appoint a secretary. The chairperson is to call an initial meeting of its members and hold hearings at the times and in the places it deems appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. In addition, the chairperson is required to hold at least one public hearing in the north, central, and southern regions of the State to meet with local volunteer first responders and solicit their input regarding recommendations for retaining and recruiting volunteers. Finally, the task force is required to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than 12 months following the date of the task force’s initial meeting.