

HCS HB 444 -- VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER DEDUCTION

SPONSOR: English

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Ways and Means by a vote of 10 to 2. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Financial Institutions and Taxation by a vote of 10 to 0.

Beginning January 1, 2016, this bill authorizes a \$500 income tax deduction for a volunteer firefighter who completes during the year at least 12 hours of any firefighter training program approved by the Office of the State Fire Marshal within the Department of Public Safety. Beginning January 1, 2016, if a firefighter completes at least 36 hours of training by completing the Basic Fire Fighter Program or being certified after completing the division's Fire Fighter I or Fire Fighter II Program, the firefighter may claim a \$1,000 deduction.

The provisions of the bill will expire December 31 six years after the effective date.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that more than half of all firefighters are volunteers and one-third of the population are protected by volunteer firefighters. These volunteers take time away from their family. This will help with recruitment and retention and reward volunteer firefighters.

Testifying for the bill was Representative English.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that this would be beneficial for volunteer firefighters.

Testifying on the bill was Greg Carrell, Division of Fire Safety, Department of Public Safety.