

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2017 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 241

**FISCAL
NOTE**

BY SENATORS TRUMP, BOSO, STOLLINGS, BLAIR, CLINE

AND RUCKER

[Introduced February 10, 2017; referred
to the Committee on Government Organization; and
then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §29-3F-1, §29-3F-2, §29-3F-3, §29-3F-4, §29-3F-5, §29-3F-6 and §29-3F-7,
 3 all relating to creating the West Virginia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Act of 2017; providing
 4 a short title; making findings; stating a purpose; establishing certification requirements for
 5 ambulance drivers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics; providing a waiver
 6 of certain fees; and establishing a tax credit.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

1 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new
 2 article, designated §29-3F-1, §29-3F-2, §29-3F-3, §29-3F-4, §29-3F-5, §29-3F-6 and §29-3F-7,
 3 all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 3F. WEST VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE ACT OF 2017.

§29-3F-1. Short title.

1 This article may be cited as the “West Virginia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Act of 2017.”

§29-3F-2. Purpose.

1 The purpose of this article is to lessen the burden on volunteer fire departments and
 2 rescue squads and those who volunteer their time and energy as members of those departments
 3 and squads in responding to fire and rescue calls.

§29-3F-3. Findings.

1 The Legislature finds that:

2 (1) Due to the state’s rural nature municipal fire departments do not cover a significant
 3 number of homes and business facilities, volunteer fire departments and rescue squads and the
 4 volunteers who staff those entities shoulder the burden in providing an essential necessary
 5 service to communities and the state as a whole;

6 (2) Volunteer fire departments and rescue squads save lives and property;

7 (3) Volunteer fire departments and rescue squads lessen the tax burden on the taxpayers;

8 (4) Volunteer fire departments and rescue squads serve the public welfare that flows from

9 public-spiritedness of the volunteer firefighters and rescue squad members; and
 10 (5) Current rules imposed by the state discourage volunteers for these important activities
 11 and provide disincentives for people to volunteer.

§29-3F-4. Ambulance drivers.

1 Notwithstanding the provisions of article four-c, chapter sixteen of this code, volunteer
 2 ambulance drivers do not have to be licensed or certified paramedics or emergency medical
 3 technicians (EMTs) if there is a paramedic or an EMT also on the emergency response. The driver
 4 must be qualified to drive and has an Emergency Vehicle Operation Certification, has passed a
 5 background check, and has basic CPR and first aid training.

§29-3F-5. Certification of emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

1 (a) For purposes of certification or recertification, EMTs and paramedics, the state's
 2 certification authority shall recognize and give full credit for all continuing education credits that
 3 have been approved or recognized by any of states contiguous to West Virginia.
 4 (b) Persons who served as a combat medic in the military within three years of honorable
 5 discharge are to be initially automatically certified as an EMT in West Virginia. However, those
 6 individuals must be recertified when appropriate.

§29-3F-6. Fees.

1 Individuals, and their respective volunteer fire departments and rescue squads, who serve
 2 as EMTs and paramedics may not be charged any fee or other expense by the State for
 3 certification or recertification as paramedics or EMTs. Nor shall any fee be charged by the state
 4 to volunteer fire departments and rescue squads and their respective drivers relating to having an
 5 ambulance or providing an ambulance service.

§29-3F-7. Tax credit.

1 For tax years beginning after January 1, 2017, Volunteer firefighters, EMTs, paramedics
 2 and drivers of volunteer fire departments and rescue squads who run or respond to twelve or
 3 more calls per calendar year are entitled to a \$200 tax credit provided by the state out of general
 4 revenue for property taxes paid in a calendar year.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to creating the West Virginia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Act of 2017. The bill provides a short title. The bill makes findings. The bill states a purpose. The bill establishes certification requirements for ambulance drivers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. The bill provides a waiver of certain fees. The bill establishes a tax credit.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.