

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
2021 THIRD EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 3027

BY SENATORS BLAIR (MR. PRESIDENT) AND BALDWIN

(BY REQUEST OF THE EXECUTIVE)

[Introduced October 11, 2021]

1 A BILL to repeal §29-32-3 and §29-32-4 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to
 2 amend and reenact §29-32-1, §29-32-2, and §29-32-5 of said code, all relating to
 3 establishing Medal of Valor for emergency medical service personnel, firefighters, and
 4 law-enforcement officers; establishing Medal of Valor and criteria; establishing First
 5 Responders Honor Board within Department of Homeland Security; defining persons
 6 whom board may recommend to receive Medal of Valor; establishing criteria for board
 7 membership; setting term of board membership; requiring board meet at least annually
 8 and provide notice thereof; providing for election of board chair and defining quorum; and
 9 requiring nominations for Medal of Valor be submitted by the first day of next regular
 10 session of Legislature.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 32. ~~MEDALS~~ MEDAL OF VALOR.

§29-32-1. Medal of Valor.

1 (a) There is hereby established a Medal of Valor to be awarded to firefighters, law-
 2 enforcement officers, and emergency medical services personnel who distinguish themselves
 3 conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their lives above and beyond the call of
 4 duty in the performance of their duties.

5 (b) A Medal of Valor ~~can~~ may only be awarded in the manner set forth in this article.

§29-32-2. First Responders Honor Board.

1 (a) The First Responders Honor Board is hereby established within the Department of
 2 Homeland Security as an advisory board to the Legislature. The purpose of the board is to
 3 recommend to the Legislature firefighters, law-enforcement officers, and emergency medical
 4 services personnel in West Virginia who have distinguished themselves conspicuously by
 5 gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their lives above and beyond the call of duty in the
 6 performance of their duties to be awarded a Medal of Valor.

7 (b) *Board membership.* —

8 (1) The board shall consist of two members from each of the state's senatorial districts.
9 Each State Senator shall appoint one member representing his or her district.

10 (2) The board shall be composed of firefighters; fire chiefs; law enforcement officials
11 such as sheriffs, correctional officers, and police chiefs; emergency medical services
12 personnel; medical officials; doctors; and other professionals who are qualified to
13 evaluate and determine whether the actions of firefighters, law-enforcement officers, and
14 emergency medical services personnel rise to the level of being above and beyond the
15 call of duty.

16 (3) Members shall serve a ~~one-year~~ three-year term and shall serve without
17 compensation.

18 (4) The board shall annually select a member to serve as the chair. The board shall hold
19 at least one annual meeting. The date, time, and place of the meetings shall be established upon
20 its own resolution or at the call of the chair of the board. Notice of each meeting shall be given to
21 each member by the chair and in compliance with the open meetings laws of the state. A majority
22 of the members of the board serving at any one time constitutes a quorum for the transaction of
23 business.

24 (c) The board may consider candidates for the Medal of Valor who are identified by
25 members of the board or by other citizens, and may design a system for the receipt of those
26 recommendations.

27 (d) The board shall review identified individuals to determine if those firefighters, law-
28 enforcement officers, and emergency medical services personnel have gone above and beyond
29 the call of duty in their professional capacities. Upon determination that a firefighter, law-
30 enforcement officer, or emergency medical services personnel is worthy of this honor, the board
31 shall submit the nomination to the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the
32 Senate for consideration by the Legislature no later than the first day of the next regular session.

§29-32-3. Law Enforcement Officers Honor Board.

[Repealed.]

§29-32-4. Emergency Medical Services Honor Board.

[Repealed.]

§29-32-5. Awarding of the Medal of Valor.

1 (a) The Legislature may act on a nomination from ~~one of the Honor Boards~~ Board
2 established by this article by passing a concurrent resolution.

3 (b) Upon nomination by the First Responders Honor Board, and adoption of a concurrent
4 resolution by the Legislature, the Governor shall bestow the Medal of Valor ~~for Firefighters~~ upon
5 the nominee.

6 ~~(c) Upon nomination by the Law Enforcement Officers Honor Board, and adoption of a~~
7 ~~concurrent resolution by the Legislature, the Governor shall bestow the Medal of Valor for Law~~
8 ~~Enforcement Officers upon the nominee.~~

9 ~~(d) Upon nomination by the Emergency Medical Services Honor Board, and adoption of a~~
10 ~~concurrent resolution by the Legislature, the Governor shall bestow the Medal of Valor for~~
11 ~~Emergency Medical Services personnel upon the nominee~~

12 ~~(e)~~ (c) The West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History shall create the ~~designs~~
13 design for the Medal of Valor ~~for Firefighters, Law Enforcement Officers, and Emergency Medical~~
14 ~~Services personnel~~ established by this article.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a Medal of Valor for emergency medical service personnel, firefighters, and law-enforcement officers; establish criteria for awarding a medal of valor; establish First Responders Honor Board within Department of Homeland Security; define persons whom board may recommend to receive Medal of Valor; establish criteria for board membership; set term of board membership; require board meet at least annually and provide notice thereof; provide for election of board chair and defining quorum; and mandate nominations for Medal of Valor be submitted by the first day of next regular session of Legislature.

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