

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2023 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2873

By Delegates Kelly, Hott, Honaker, Shamblin,
Westfall, Jeffries, Phillips, Reynolds, and Sheedy

[By the Request of the Department of Homeland
Security]

[Introduced January 20, 2023; Referred to the
Committee on Fire Departments and Emergency
Medical Services then Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §29-32-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
 2 modifying the approval process requirements for the First Responders Honor Board to allow for
 3 submission of nominations for consideration by the Legislature at other times and/or during other
 4 sessions of the Legislature, not just before the first day of the regular legislative session.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 32. MEDAL OF VALOR.

§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 such
 11 as sheriffs, correctional officers, and police chiefs; emergency medical services personnel;
 12 medical officials; doctors; and other professionals who are qualified to evaluate and determine
 13 whether the actions of firefighters, law-enforcement officers, and emergency medical services
 14 personnel rise to the level of being above and beyond the call of duty.

15 (3) Members shall serve a three-year term and shall serve without compensation.

16 (4) The board shall annually select a member to serve as the chair. The board shall hold at
 17 least one annual meeting. The date, time, and place of the meetings shall be established upon its
 18 own resolution or at the call of the chair of the board. Notice of each meeting shall be given to each
 19 member by the chair and in compliance with the open meetings laws of the state. A majority of the

20 members of the board serving at any one time constitutes a quorum for the transaction of
21 business.

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

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

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to modify the approval process requirements for the First Responders Honor Board. This bill was recommended for introduction during the 2023 regular session by the Department of Homeland Security.

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