
ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 1628

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Bronoske, Griffey, Schmidt, Simmons, Nance, Davis,
and Salahuddin

Read first time 01/27/25. Referred to Committee on State Government
& Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of the fire service policy board;
2 adding a new section to chapter 43.44 RCW; and creating a new
3 section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Washington
6 state's fire service has evolved significantly over the past quarter
7 century. Since the mid-1990s, fire departments across the state have
8 taken on more responsibilities than ever previously envisioned. In
9 addition to fire suppression, Washington's fire service has evolved
10 to provide basic and advanced life support, educate the public on
11 fire prevention, perform technical rescue, respond to hazardous
12 materials incidents, provide all-hazards response to wildland fires,
13 natural disasters, and pandemics and infectious disease outbreaks,
14 and more. During this same time, Washington's population has grown by
15 more than two million residents.

16 The legislature further finds that the fire service delivery work
17 group established in 2023 and comprised of stakeholders from the
18 entirety of the fire service in Washington state highlighted that the
19 state fire marshal's office has been significantly deprioritized and
20 underfunded for the last 10 years or longer. Over the last 10 years,
21 just 3.4 percent of the state fire marshal's office policy level

1 budget requests were funded, while the fire service training
2 account's year-end balance declined \$6.2 million over the last 12
3 years due to insufficient funding. These funding shortfalls have
4 resulted in several statutory mandates being unperformed, including
5 fire investigations, which compromise preventative efforts to reduce
6 fire occurrences and fire impacts, ultimately compromising community
7 and environmental safety. Further, inadequate funding for firefighter
8 training creates unequal access to training opportunities, especially
9 in rural and economically vulnerable areas that cannot afford to
10 travel to the training academy. Inaccessible firefighter training
11 risks the safety of historically marginalized communities, their
12 firefighters, and natural environments.

13 The legislature acknowledges the breadth and depth of the
14 services the public expects, and that the fire service delivers, to
15 protect life, property, and the environment. Therefore, the
16 legislature intends to establish the fire service policy board to
17 ensure that the state director of fire protection has the necessary
18 authority and support to guarantee the continued provision of
19 comprehensive fire service training, fire prevention, investigations,
20 and all-hazards response for all of Washington state.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.44
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 (1) There is created the Washington state fire service policy
24 board to generally advise the state director of fire protection on
25 all matters related to the purview of the state fire marshal's
26 office. This includes, but is not limited to, developing
27 recommendations regarding agency budget requests and developing
28 strategies to enhance the safe and effective delivery of fire service
29 training and resources.

30 (2) The fire service policy board consists of:

31 (a) The president of the Washington state council of
32 firefighters, or the president's designee;

33 (b) The president of the Washington state firefighters'
34 association, or the president's designee;

35 (c) The executive director of the Washington state fire
36 commissioners association, or the director's designee;

37 (d) The executive director of the Washington fire chiefs
38 association, or the director's designee; and

1 (e) The president of the Washington state fire marshals
2 association, or the president's designee.

3 (3) The members of the fire service policy board shall designate
4 an administrative chair to facilitate meetings. The board shall
5 convene quarterly, at a minimum, as well as subject to the call of
6 the administrative chair for any purpose that directly relates to the
7 duties set forth in subsection (1) of this section or as is otherwise
8 requested by the state director of fire protection or the
9 administrative chair.

10 (4) In performing the duties under this section, the fire service
11 policy board is encouraged to seek input from representatives of
12 industries licensed or regulated by the state fire marshal's office,
13 agencies, and other organizations, as appropriate. The fire service
14 policy board may create ad-hoc, voluntary advisory committees as
15 needed. Members of an advisory committee and individuals serving in
16 an advisory capacity may not be reimbursed for expenses or receive
17 compensation or other funding, for activities performed under this
18 subsection.

19 (5) Each member of the fire service policy board serves without
20 compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses as authorized
21 in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

22 (6) The members of the fire service policy board, or individuals
23 acting on their behalf, are immune from civil liability for official
24 acts performed in the course of their duties.

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