

# **Belt Advances Measure To Help Recruit Volunteer Firefighters And EMS Personnel**

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**SPRINGFIELD** – To recruit more volunteer firefighters, a measure sponsored by State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Swansea) that would provide an income tax credit for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel passed the Senate Revenue Committee Wednesday.

“After hearing from local fire departments, it is clear we need to find a way to get more people to sign up to join our volunteer fire departments,” Belt said. “It is my hope that providing a tax credit for volunteers who serve at least nine months will encourage more long-term volunteers.”

Senate Bill 3027 would provide a \$500 income tax credit for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel who are a member or work for a fire department or fire protection district for at least nine months and do not receive more than \$10,000 for their volunteer services during the taxable year. Current law does not provide a tax credit. Other states that offer a similar credit include New York, Iowa and Maryland.

The proposed tax credit cannot reduce a taxpayer’s liability to less than zero. If the proposed tax credit exceeds the tax liability for the year, the excess may be applied within the next five taxable years. The credit would be applied to the earliest tax year in which there is a tax liability. If there are credits for more than one year, the earlier credit would be applied first.

“Emergency responders are the first people we call in a crisis,” Belt said. “Incentivizing volunteers with a tax credit is one way we can ensure fire departments have the resources to respond in a timely manner.”

Senate Bill 3027 passed the Senate Revenue Committee and heads to the full Senate for further consideration.