

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2019-128

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3 REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE SENATE
4 COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS REQUESTING THAT THE
5 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS CONDUCT A
6 STUDY OF THE BEST PRACTICES OF FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN THE STATE AND
7 IN THE NATION THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN A LOCAL COMMUNITY TO
8 IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.
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10 WHEREAS, because of the rural nature of local communities that are
11 served by many fire departments in the state, the responsibilities of a fire
12 department include more than just fire protection, including without
13 limitation providing assistance for medical calls, rescues, and other
14 emergency services; and
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16 WHEREAS, a large number of fire departments are staffed by an aging
17 population of volunteers and fire departments are currently having a
18 difficult time obtaining new volunteers and keeping experienced volunteers;
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21 WHEREAS, there are over nine hundred (900) fire departments in the
22 state and many of these fire departments overlap service areas of other
23 jurisdictions or cover areas that are too large to provide adequate fire
24 protection; and
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26 WHEREAS, there is no central means of communication to and for these
27 fire departments and no statewide coordinator; and
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29 WHEREAS, data collection across the state is needed to gather
30 information on equipment supply and demand, funding issues, and other related
31 areas; and
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33 WHEREAS, national and state research should be analyzed to study
34 possible improvements to the public protection classification system used by
35 the state to evaluate the fire loss risk of local communities and its impact
36 on property insurance rates; and

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WHEREAS, there are a number of fire departments that operate within municipalities for municipalities with no organize municipal fire department; and the procedures and challenges for these departments need to be examined; and

WHEREAS, there is consistent misuse of fire department funds, creating a need for a uniform audit mechanism to be put in place; and

WHEREAS, there are a number of different types of fire departments in the state, resulting in a lack of uniformity in business structure and operation that is confusing for property owners, insurance companies, and fire departments themselves; and in light of recent legislation affecting fire protection districts, the differences in departments need to be examined and compared to determine advantages and disadvantages of the types of organization,

BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House Committee On City, County, And Local Affairs conduct an interim study to determine the best practices of fire departments in the state and in the nation that may be implemented in a local community to improve efficiency.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and analyze the impact of an increase in funding to volunteer fire departments.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review the role of fire departments including without limitation response to fires, medical assistance calls, rescues, and other emergency services.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and analyze potential incentives and methods to recruit and retain volunteers for volunteer fire departments.

1 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review the number of volunteer
2 fire departments and any available resources in the state to determine the
3 most efficient operation of volunteer fire departments and evaluate if
4 consolidation of fire departments or other options or measures are necessary
5 to improve efficiency.

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7 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review any and all other
8 pertinent information related to this endeavor.

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10 Prepared by: KLC/KLC

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