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INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2013-201

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3 REQUESTING THAT THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL
4 AFFAIRS CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE BEST PRACTICES OF FIRE DEPARTMENTS
5 IN THE STATE AND IN THE NATION THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN A LOCAL
6 COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.
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8 WHEREAS, the Insurance Services Office, Inc. is a private, for-profit
9 company that provides fire loss risk evaluations based on its Fire
10 Suppression Rating Schedule to determine the capabilities of a local
11 community fire department to respond to fires; and
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13 WHEREAS, the Insurance Services Office, Inc. helps insurers calculate
14 local property insurance rates by grading a local community's fire loss risk
15 that is used for property insurance rating schedules; and
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17 WHEREAS, a local community's public protection classification grade is
18 calculated by comparing the actual conditions in a local area with the
19 standards of the fire suppression rating schedule; and
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21 WHEREAS, recent revisions to the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule used
22 by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. will impact a local community's public
23 protection classification grade and property insurance rating schedules; and
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25 WHEREAS, national and state research should be analyzed to study
26 possible improvements to the public protection classification system used by
27 the state to evaluate the fire loss risk of local communities and its impact
28 on property insurance rates; and
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30 WHEREAS, because of the rural nature of local communities that are
31 served by many fire departments in the state, the responsibilities of a fire
32 department include more than just fire protection, including without
33 limitation providing assistance for medical calls, rescues, and other
34 emergency services; and
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1 WHEREAS, a large number of fire departments are staffed by an aging
2 population of volunteers and fire departments are currently having a
3 difficult time obtaining new volunteers and keeping experienced volunteers;
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, there are one thousand three (1003) fire departments in the
7 state and many of these fire departments overlap service areas of other
8 jurisdictions or cover areas that are too large to provide adequate fire
9 protection; and

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11 WHEREAS, there are a number of different types of fire departments in
12 the state, resulting in a lack of uniformity in business structure and
13 operation that is confusing for property owners, insurance companies, and
14 fire departments themselves; and the departments that are organized as fire
15 protection districts seem to be the most efficient and effective way to
16 organize a fire department,

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18 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS OF
19 THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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

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26 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and provide a proposal for
27 the implementation of an in-state property insurance rating system that does
28 not utilize or participate in the Insurance Services Office, Inc.'s Fire
29 Suppression Rating Schedule and public protection classification system.

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

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and study the conversion of all non-municipal fire departments to fire protection districts.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and develop an overall comprehensive plan to bring all the non-municipal fire department's Insurance Services Office, Inc.'s public protection class rating to a six (6) or less by 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Kim Hammer
District 28

By: ANS/ANS