

House Republican Press Release

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REP. ROWE SPONSORS LEGISLATION TO BENEFIT VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES



HARTFORD- State Representative T.R. Rowe, R-Trumbull, has cosponsored legislation that would allow firefighters who hold paid positions to also serve as a volunteer firefighter in the another community. House Bill 6927, An Act Concerning Volunteer Service By Paid Emergency Personnel Or Paid Firefighters, has been approved by the Legislature's Public Safety and Security

Committee and currently sits before the Appropriations Committee.

In recent years, many paid firefighters across the state have expressed a desire to volunteer for service in other communities but are prohibited from doing so by contractual agreements. Rep. Rowe noted that as volunteer fire companies have difficult fulfilling positions, the legislation could help communities throughout the state.

“Volunteer firefighters are among any community’s most valued public servants,” said Rep. Rowe. “They put their lives on the line to protect the lives and property of all residents. If someone who holds a paid firefighting position wants to provide that service as a volunteer elsewhere, they have clearly earned that right.”

Wayne Schalich, chief of Trumbull Volunteer Fire Co. No.1, Inc. also expressed support for the legislation.

“We have had significant issues regarding paid members being considered in violation of contracts for joining a "rival" organization, such as the Trumbull Vol. Fire Co.,” said Schalich. “In fact, the cities of Hartford and Bridgeport have included language in their firefighter contracts that prohibit them from belonging to volunteer fire departments. Volunteer departments such as ours routinely train new members. These individuals become proficient at firefighting, at Trumbull residents' expense, and many times move on to career/paid positions. This leaves our residents not only holding the bill, but with one less trained firefighter available each time they are hired to a paid position. Most towns in which career firefighters would volunteer strictly used a volunteer fire companies and do not have union jobs at risk. Volunteers are not out to jeopardize people's livelihoods. This legislation would help any paid firefighter who would like to give back to the communities where they reside.”

In addition, the Connecticut State Firefighters Association (CSFA) has voiced support for HB 6827. During a February 15 public hearing at the State Capitol, CSFA representative Ted Schroll said the organization believes firefighters should be able to use their personal time as they want without being impacted by contractual agreements.