



AURORA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

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January 26, 2023

Good Morning,

My name is Bobby Meyer and I am President of the Aurora Rural Fire Protection District 63 Board of Directors. Prior to that role, I served as a Volunteer Firefighter for 45 years and retired from active duty as a Battalion Chief /EMT-Intermediate. In fact, when I retired, the Oregon Health Authority told me that I had the 10th oldest EMT number in the state and my DPSST number is only 4 digits!

Now for the reason I am here... Senate Bill 728 concerns an income tax deduction of \$1,000 for Volunteer Firefighters. Any reimbursement that we can provide to Volunteer Firefighters will help immensely with recruitment and retention. Gone are the days when the barber, the farmer, or store owner would be able to drop what they were doing and respond to a fire or medical call. Along with those changes, today's society is also very transient. Almost no one buys a house and lives there for 30+ years anymore, which has become problematic for fire service agencies.

Within a community, a fire district will literally spend thousands of dollars and a lot of hours training a Firefighter / EMT. The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) Physical cost is \$650 alone. The next step is getting a recruit through a Firefighter 1 Academy or perhaps a basic EMT class, which can take up to a year. Once they are trained, they are issued certified uniforms and gear which also costs a significant amount of money in order for them to be protected with proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) – including turnouts, boots, helmets, Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs), radios, etc. Unfortunately, within a couple years, they often move on and find jobs somewhere else. I truly believe that SB728 will help us not only with recruitment, but also with retaining our trained personnel and perhaps be the incentive they need to continue as a first responder and plant roots within the communities in which they've been supported and served.

Please let me know if you need any clarification of anything I have stated here today. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have of me.

Sincerely,

Bobby Meyer

Bobby Meyer
President, Aurora Rural Fire Protection District 63 Board of Directors