



## 2019 Legislative Report Kansas State Fire Fighters Association

### SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION OF 2019

Please see our following report on Legislative lobbying and monitoring activities conducted on behalf of the KSFFA by Federico Consulting, Inc.:

- Nearly 50 pieces of Legislation spanning several committees were monitored.
- Federico Consulting and the KSFFA were instrumental in drafting, strategizing, introducing and lobbying SB15, which would amend the definition of "service-connected" in the Kansas police and firemen's retirement system (see below for more details).
- The KSFFA hosted its annual Legislative Barbeque. Once again (despite bad weather and a chaotic legislative schedule) turnout was good, with roughly 75 legislators plus guests attended the event, including an appearance by Lt. Governor Lynn Rogers.
- The KSFFA continued to serve as a source of information and reference on a variety of issues throughout the Session for legislators. Based on lawmaker's willingness to call upon their expertise, and recognize their needs, we believe this Association continues to be among one of the more influential in the state.

### SPECIFIC LEGISLATION OF NOTE FOR THE KSFFA

Specific legislation that was monitored and/or lobbied on this year, included (but is not limited to) the following:

- ***HB2031 - Amending the definition of "service-connected" in the Kansas police and firemen's retirement system.*** Stakeholders began talking to each other in December about how best to introduce and pass a bill that would, among other things, provide for benefit coverage for cancer contracted while answering a service-call. Significantly, the bill required us to work closely with both Senator Rob Olson (R-Olathe), Chairman of the Senate Financial Institutions & Insurance Committee, and Representative Jim Kelly (R-Independence) of the House Financial Institutions & Pensions Committee. Once the bill was heard by both committees, members of those specific committees were then lobbied to support the bill. Further, because the bill was amended by both the House and Senate, it had to go to Conference Committee. We followed up with both Committee Chairmen to ensure that the bill would get put into a Conference Committee Report and eventually passed and sent to the Governor. **This bill was approved by the Governor on April 18, 2019 and will become effective on July 1, 2019.**

- ***SB128 - Requiring at least nine safety drills to be conducted by schools each year including fire, tornado and crisis drills.*** SB128 amends law related to the minimum number of safety drills required to be conducted in schools each school year. The bill requires the State Fire Marshal to adopt rules and regulations requiring administrators of public and private schools and educational institutions, except community colleges, colleges, and universities, to conduct at least four fire drills, two tornado drills (one in September and one in March), and three crisis drills each school year. The bill passed both the House and Senate Education Committees before being voted on by full legislative bodies. **This bill was approved by the Governor on April 10, 2019 and will become effective upon publication in the statute book.**
- ***HB2026 - Enacting the fire sprinkler industry act.*** HB2026 would require the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to create and oversee a licensure process beginning July 1, 2020, for anyone who engages in work in the fire sprinkler industry. The OSFM would be required to design and administer an examination for potential licensees to test their experience and training as well as run background checks, including fingerprinting. The bill would create general guidelines for the knowledge, skills, and experience required of applicants for the examination. The bill would create licenses for fire sprinkler companies, managers, trainees, inspectors, and technicians as well as the license designations of testing and inspection and installation, design, and maintenance. The bill would require fire sprinkler companies that engage in planning, design, installation, repair, alteration, maintenance, service, sale, inspection or advertisement of fire sprinkler systems to possess a license.

The bill would further require that every company have a fire sprinkler manager on staff and would require that fees be charged for the licenses. It would also charge fines for those who fail to obtain a license.

This bill did have a hearing on February 12. Proponents included Rep. Tory Arnberger (R-Great Bend) and Fire Marshal Doug Jorgensen. Opponents included many members representing local governments. Our advice on this bill (which we have seen fail before) was to “wait and see” what happened before weighing in. As we predicted, **the bill was not worked, and has not yet advanced.** This bill was heard in the House Commerce Committee and was authored by Rep. Stan Frownfelter (D-Kansas City).

- ***HB2043 -Review of tax credits, tax exemptions and economic development programs -*** HB2043, as amended, would require the Kansas Insurance Department, Kansas Department of Commerce, and Kansas Department of Revenue to periodically present to the appropriate Senate and House committees a review of certain tax credits, incentives, and sales tax exemptions.

Our initial hesitation with this bill was that it would require the Fire Fighters Relief Fund Credit to be one of the items that was reported on to the Legislature, which would bring additional attention to the fund that is vital to the fire service. **The bill was worked and was passed out of committee, but was not taken up on the House floor.** This bill was part of several “transparency bills” aimed primarily at economic incentive programs, as opposed to credits. The bill was authored by Rep. Jim Gartner (D-Topeka) who told our team, after we asked why he included the Relief Fund as one of the programs to be reported on, that he only included the Fund because he wanted to capture *all* credits, incentives, and sales tax exemptions rather than choose only a few.

**SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE GOAL FOR NEXT SESSION**

The KSFFA has already begun bringing together stakeholders to support legislation aimed at covering forms of service-connected PTSD. Because of the issue's complexity, we will begin education and lobbying efforts in the summer and fall when we visit legislators across the state. We believe this will be a significantly difficult effort in 2020, which is why we will begin work prior to the start of the Legislative Session.