

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 42

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes task force to study and make recommendations concerning stabilization and growth of volunteer first responder community.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** establishing a task force to study and make
 2 recommendations concerning the stabilization and growth of
 3 volunteer first responders.

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5 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
 6 *State of New Jersey:*

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8 1. a. There is hereby created a task force to be known as the
 9 “Special Task Force on Volunteer Retention and Recruitment.” The
 10 task force shall study and make recommendations for short-term
 11 and long-term strategies, incentives, and policies for the retention
 12 and recruitment of volunteer first responders to ensure the State’s
 13 volunteer first responder ranks stabilize and grow in order to be
 14 able to adequately service the communities in this State.
 15 Specifically, the task force’s charge shall include, but not be limited
 16 to, the evaluation of incentives, training and recertification
 17 requirements, and the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP)
 18 for volunteer first responders.

19 b. The task force shall consist of 15 members as follows:

20 (1) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who shall serve
 21 ex-officio;

22 (2) the Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services in
 23 the Department of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;

24 (3) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the Department
 25 of Community Affairs or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;

26 (4) a representative of the New Jersey State First Aid Council,
 27 appointed by the President of the Senate;

28 (5) a representative of the New Jersey State Firemen’s
 29 Association who is a member of an all volunteer fire company,
 30 appointed by the President of the Senate;

31 (6) a representative of the New Jersey State League of
 32 Municipalities, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

33 (7) a representative of the New Jersey Association of Counties,
 34 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

35 (8) two public members who are volunteer first responders,
 36 appointed by the President of the Senate;

37 (9) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer
 38 ambulance, first aid and rescue squad, appointed by the Speaker of
 39 the General Assembly;

40 (10) a public member who is a member of an all volunteer fire
 41 company, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

42 (11) two members of the Senate, who shall not be from the
 43 same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate; and

44 (12) two members of the General Assembly, who shall not be
 45 from the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the
 46 General Assembly.

47 c. All appointments to the task force shall be made within 90
 48 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies shall be filled in

1 the same manner as the original appointments. The task force shall
2 select a chairperson from among the members. The chairperson
3 shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task
4 force. The members of the task force shall serve without
5 compensation but may be reimbursed, within the limits of funds
6 made available to the task force, for necessary travel expenses
7 incurred in the performance of their duties.

8 d. The chairperson shall call an initial meeting of the task force
9 within 30 days of the appointment of its members and hold hearings
10 at the times and in the places it may deem appropriate and
11 necessary to fulfill its charge. The chairperson shall hold at least
12 one public hearing in each of the north, central, and southern
13 regions of the State to meet with local volunteer first responders
14 and solicit their input regarding recommendations for retaining and
15 recruiting volunteers.

16 e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
17 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
18 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
19 may require and may be available to it for its purposes.

20 f. A report of the task force's findings and recommendations
21 shall be submitted to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of
22 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the President of the Senate and
23 Speaker of the General Assembly no later than 12 months following
24 the date of the task force's initial meeting.

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26 2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately and shall
27 expire upon submission of the task force's final report to the
28 Governor and Legislature.

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STATEMENT

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33 This joint resolution establishes a "Special Task Force on
34 Volunteer Retention and Recruitment" to study and make
35 recommendations for strategies, incentives, and policies for the
36 retention and recruitment of the State's volunteer first responders to
37 ensure their ranks stabilize and grow in order to be able to
38 adequately service the communities in this State.

39 Specifically, the task force's charge is to include, but not be
40 limited to, the evaluation of incentives, training and recertification
41 requirements, and the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP)
42 for volunteer first responders.

43 The 15-member task force would be comprised of the following
44 members: (1) the Commissioner of Health or a designee, who is to
45 serve ex-officio; (2) the Director of the Office of Emergency
46 Medical Services in the Department of Health or a designee, who is
47 to serve ex-officio; (3) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in
48 the Department of Community Affairs or a designee, who is to

1 serve ex-officio; (4) a representative of the New Jersey State First
 2 Aid Council, appointed by the President of the Senate; (5) a
 3 representative of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association who
 4 is a member of an all volunteer fire company, appointed by the
 5 President of the Senate; (6) a representative of the New Jersey State
 6 League of Municipalities, appointed by the Speaker of the General
 7 Assembly; (7) a representative of the New Jersey Association of
 8 Counties, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (8)
 9 two public members who are volunteer first responders, appointed
 10 by the President of the Senate; (9) a public member who is a
 11 member of an all volunteer ambulance, first aid and rescue squad,
 12 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (10) a public
 13 member who is a member of an all volunteer fire company,
 14 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; (11) two
 15 members of the Senate, who shall not be from the same political
 16 party, appointed by the President of the Senate; and (12) two
 17 members of the General Assembly, who shall not be from the same
 18 political party, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

19 The bill requires the task force appointments to be made within
 20 90 days of the bill's effective date. The committee is to select a
 21 chairperson from among its members and the chairperson is
 22 required to appoint a secretary. The chairperson is to call an initial
 23 meeting of its members and hold hearings at the times and in the
 24 places it deems appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge. In
 25 addition, the chairperson is required to hold at least one public
 26 hearing in the north, central, and southern regions of the State to
 27 meet with local volunteer first responders and solicit their input
 28 regarding recommendations for retaining and recruiting volunteers.

29 Finally, the task force is required to report its findings and
 30 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than
 31 12 months following the date of the task force's initial meeting.