

- SUBJECT:** Requiring written notice of hearings to firefighters
- COMMITTEE:** Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Alvarado, Hunter, R. Anderson, Bernal, Elkins
2 nays — Schaefer, M. White
- WITNESSES:** For — Alvin White, Houston Professional Firefighters Association;
(*Registered, but did not testify:* Chris Jones, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT); Sean Dailey and Johnny Villareal, Houston Professional Firefighters Association; Glenn Deshields, Texas State Association of Fire Fighters; Mike Martinez)

Against — Cynthia Vargas, City of Houston Fire Department
- BACKGROUND:** Local Government Code, sec. 143.1014 requires fire and police departments to give firefighters or police officers a minimum of 48 hours' notice of the time and location for a hearing or meeting related to:
- an internal departmental or other municipal investigation of the firefighter or police officer at which the firefighter or police officer is required or entitled to attend; or
 - a grievance filed by a firefighter or police officer.
- Some fire departments may give notice of hearings by telephone or email. Because firefighters do not always check email on days off, they might not receive notice with sufficient time to acquire adequate representation at the hearing.
- DIGEST:** HB 2785 would require fire departments to deliver notice of hearings to firefighters either by hand delivery or by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last home address provided by the firefighter.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and would apply only to a notice required to be provided on or after the effective date.