

- SUBJECT:** Providing illness or injury leave for firefighters and police officers.
- COMMITTEE:** County Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Coleman, Stucky, Anderson, Cason, Lopez, Spiller, J. Turner
0 nays
2 absent — Longoria, Stephenson
- WITNESSES:** For — Matthew Sapp, Frisco Firefighters Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Chris Jones and Charley Wilkison, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; Michelle Wittenburg, Dallas Fire Fighters Association; Frederick Frazier, Dallas Police Association/FOP716 State FOP Director; Ray Hunt, HPOU; Jimmy Rodriguez, San Antonio Police Officers Association; Jose Rodriguez, Texas Municipal Police Association; Glenn Deshields, Texas State Association of Fire Fighters; Jeremy Payne)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Brie Franco, City of Austin; Peter Zaroni, City of Corpus Christi; TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth; Rick Ramirez, City of Sugar Land; Ender Reed, Harris County Commissioners Court; Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that firefighters and police officers who take leave to recover from an injury or illness may be at risk of losing their jobs.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2242 would require counties and municipalities to provide firefighters and police officers a leave of absence for an illness or injury related to their line of duty. The leave would be with full pay for a period commensurate with the nature of the illness or injury, and would continue for at least one year if necessary.

At the end of the one-year period, the county's or municipality's governing body would be able to extend the leave at full or reduced pay. If the year

at full pay and any extensions had expired, the employee would be placed on temporary leave.

If the leave was not extended or the employee's salary was reduced to less than 60 percent of their regular monthly salary, the employee could retire on pension until able to return to duty. If pension benefits were not available to a police officer or firefighter who was temporarily disabled by a line of duty illness or injury and the year of full-pay leave and any extensions had expired, the employee could use accumulated sick leave, vacation time, and other accrued benefits before being placed on temporary leave.

A firefighter or police officer who was temporarily disabled by an injury or illness not related to the person's line of duty could use accumulated sick leave, vacation time, and other accrued benefits before being placed on temporary leave or have another firefighter or police officer volunteer to do the person's work while the person was temporarily disabled.

If able, a firefighter or police officer could return to light duty while recovering from a temporary disability. If medically necessary, the light duty could continue for at least one year. After recovery from a temporary disability, a firefighter or police officer would have to be reinstated at the same rank and seniority held before going on temporary leave. Another firefighter or police officer could voluntarily do the work of an injured firefighter or officer until the person returned to duty.

Any collective bargaining, meet and confer, or similar agreement providing a benefit for an ill or injured employee would be required at a minimum to comply with the bill's provisions.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply only to a collective bargaining, meet and confer, or other agreement entered into on or after that date.