

House Committee on Local Government – Proponent Testimony

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Madame Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2137.

HB 2137 helps EMS communities and predominantly volunteer services by not restricting those individuals that are able to respond during an emergency.

It is our belief, that an elected local official should be able to maintain the right to provide volunteer EMS or fire fighting service to the community for which they serve.

Recruitment and retention of personnel are two of the largest obstacles for smaller ambulance services to overcome. When populations are already low, restricting the number of personnel that could be potential solutions to that problem would prove detrimental to that service continuing to survive.

Early last Summer, I was contacted about a situation occurring in a rural area of our state. In that situation, the local elected official was given an ultimatum – continue in the elected role or continue volunteering for the local EMS service.

After multiple phone calls and conversations with the elected official and many of that area's constituents, this local elected official decided that continuing in the elected role allowed for better support of the individuals that he represented.

It does not seem right to require an individual to make this kind of choice to provide a volunteer service. We were encouraged to see the introduction of HB 2137 allowing an elected official to continue to function in a volunteer EMS or volunteer fire fighter role and allowing them another avenue to continue to serve the community or jurisdiction that they represent.

We urge your support of HB 2137 and its favorable passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have at the appropriate time.