

## HB23 INTRODUCED



1 FKXSCD-1  
2 By Representative Brown  
3 RFD: State Government  
4 First Read: 07-Mar-23  
5 PFD: 08-Feb-23



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would make legislative findings that volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue squads are public in nature and fulfill a necessary public purpose.

This bill would provide for the health and safety of firefighters and rescue squad members by permitting volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue squads to use restricted funds to buy kitchen equipment for the fire station and food and liquids for the nourishment of firefighters and squad members. This bill would further authorize mileage reimbursement to volunteer firefighters and volunteer rescue squad members for travel to and from a fire call or a rescue event.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue squads; to make legislative findings that volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue squads fulfill a public purpose; to authorize volunteer fire departments and volunteer



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29 rescue squads to purchase kitchen equipment and supplies for  
30 their stations; and to authorize mileage reimbursement to  
31 firefighters and squad members.

32 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

33 Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares the  
34 following:

35 (1) Volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue  
36 squads are public in nature and fulfill a necessary public  
37 purpose in providing fire protection and emergency rescue  
38 services to the public.

39 (2) Volunteer fire departments are the front line of  
40 defense in the fire protection of homeowners in rural Alabama  
41 and other areas not served by paid fire services while  
42 volunteer rescue squads are often the lifeline to individuals  
43 in danger.

44 (3) Volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue  
45 squads must have a sufficient number of personnel who are  
46 properly trained and dedicated to serving their communities at  
47 all times of the day and night on a voluntary basis.

48 Section 2. For the purposes of this act, the following  
49 words have the following meanings:

50 (1) DEPARTMENT. A volunteer fire department certified  
51 by the State Forestry Commission and meeting the requirements  
52 of Section 9-3-17, Code of Alabama 1975.

53 (2) SQUAD. A volunteer rescue squad located in Alabama  
54 which is a member of the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads  
55 and is either administered by a board of directors or by its  
56 membership that maintains recorded minutes of its decisions.



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57 (3) STATION. The location where a volunteer fire  
58 department or a volunteer rescue squad meets, trains, and  
59 stores its motorized and nonmotorized firefighting or rescue  
60 equipment.

61 (4) VOLUNTEER FIRST RESPONDER. An individual who is a  
62 member of a volunteer fire department or a member of a  
63 volunteer rescue squad.

64 Section 3. (a) To provide for the health and safety of  
65 volunteer first responders, a department or squad may use  
66 funds that are designated as restricted for accounting  
67 purposes by the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts to  
68 purchase the following:

69 (1) Kitchen equipment for the station, including  
70 refrigeration equipment, cooking equipment, microwaves, and  
71 other kitchen equipment. All kitchen equipment shall be the  
72 property of the department or squad.

73 (2) Food to be stored or refrigerated at the station  
74 for on-site consumption by volunteer first responders and  
75 electrolyte replacement or sports drinks, water, and similar  
76 liquid sustenance in any form for use by volunteer first  
77 responders during training or on a fire or rescue call.

78 (b) Any funds expended pursuant to this section shall  
79 be accounted for by the department or squad.

80 Section 4. (a) A department or squad may provide  
81 mileage reimbursement to a volunteer first responder up to the  
82 standard mileage rate of a state employee for actual mileage  
83 for the use of his or her personal motor vehicle to travel  
84 from his or her home or place of employment to a fire,



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85 emergency, or rescue call and for return to his or her home or  
86 place of employment.

87 (b) The mileage reimbursement claim shall be submitted  
88 by a signed statement of the volunteer first responder and  
89 shall be approved in the case of a department by the fire  
90 chief or assistant fire chief or in the case of a squad by the  
91 captain or squad leader as verification that the volunteer  
92 first responder was present at a call.

93 (c) The payment of mileage reimbursement shall be  
94 authorized by a recorded vote of the board of a department or  
95 a squad, or in the case of a squad without a board, by a  
96 recorded vote of its membership.

97 Section 5. This act shall become effective on the first  
98 day of the third month following its passage and approval by  
99 the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.