



2020 WFCA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The WFCA Legislative Committee met a number of times during the interim and at its November meeting, finalized priorities for the upcoming session, which will commence on January 13, 2020. This will be a 60-day session with an emphasis on replacement of state revenue due to the passage of Initiative 976. We will diligently monitor all bills and keep you informed with weekly email updates beginning Friday, January 24.

2020 WFCA PRIORITY ISSUES

- **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION ENHANCEMENTS.** The Washington State Firefighters' Association (WSFFA) has introduced legislation (EHB 1912) to increase the maximum pension from \$300 up to \$350. The annual disability fee will increase from \$30 to \$50 per year for each volunteer and the annual pension fee will increase from \$60 to \$90 per year per volunteer. SUPPORT/HIGH PRIORITY.
- **EXEMPT COMMISSIONER COMPENSATION FROM FMLA.** WFCA will propose legislation to exempt fire commissioner per diem compensation from the Family Medical Leave Act for administrative cost savings particularly since commissioners do not receive sick leave benefits.
- **WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING ISSUES/FUNDING.** WFCA supports additional funding for Department of Natural Resources fire suppression, prescribed burns and contracts.
- **PERMANENT FIRE DISTRICT BENEFIT CHARGE.** WFCA supports legislation to provide authority for voter-approved permanent benefit charge.
- **JOINT APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COMMITTEE (JATC) STUDY.** WFCA supports study of the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) for firefighters training with possible movement out of the State Fire Marshal's Office.
- **RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS.** WFCA supports the Washington Fire Marshals' legislation with regard to residential fire sprinklers.

The issues outlined below will be closely monitored in 2020:

- ♦ EMS levy increase from 50¢ to 75¢ maximum. **Long-term SUPPORT.**
- ♦ Fire district levies outside the constitutional one percent. **Long-term SUPPORT** as this would require a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate and approval by the people at a general election. This is a constitutional amendment.
- ♦ **SUPPORT** full funding of all public pensions.
- ♦ Monitor and take positions on all property tax proposals for cost impacts to fire districts/departments/regional fire authorities (RFAs).
- ♦ State Agency Legislation. The WFCA will monitor and take appropriate positions on state agency legislation, such as: Board for Volunteer Firefighters, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Retirement Systems, Department of Revenue, Insurance Commissioner, State Auditor, State Patrol and State Treasurer.
- ♦ Sunshine Legislation. The WFCA will monitor and take appropriate positions on any amendments to the Open Public Records Act and/or Open Public Meetings Act. Some issues we have identified and oppose as adverse legislation include: Erosion of protection of attorney/client privilege for local elected officials and mandatory recording of executive sessions.

NOTE: Priority papers with more content on specific bills will be emailed to the WFCA membership prior to the Tuesday, January 28, 2020 WFCA/WFC Legislative Day. We look forward to seeing you in Olympia!