

SENATE BILL 378

By Ketron

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 50,  
Chapter 1, Part 3, relative to canine search and  
rescue volunteers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 50-1-307, is amended by deleting subsections (a), (b), and (c) and substituting instead the following:

(a) No employer shall terminate an employee who is a volunteer firefighter or a canine search and rescue volunteer solely because the employee, when acting as a volunteer firefighter or canine search and rescue volunteer, is absent or late to the employee's employment in order to respond to an emergency prior to the time the employee is to report to employee's place of employment.

(b) An employer may charge against the employee's regular pay any time that an employee who is a volunteer firefighter or canine search and rescue volunteer loses from employment because of the employee's response to an emergency.

(c) An employer has the right to request an employee who loses time from the employee's employment to respond to an emergency to provide the employer with a written statement from the supervisor or acting supervisor of the volunteer fire department or volunteer canine search and rescue organization stating that the employee responded to an emergency and listing the time and date of the emergency.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 50-1-309, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and substituting instead the following:

(a) Notwithstanding § 50-1-307, any employee who is an active volunteer firefighter or canine search and rescue volunteer may be permitted to leave work in

order to respond to fire calls or search and rescue operations during the employee's regular hours of employment without loss of pay, vacation time, sick leave, or earned overtime accumulation. The employee may be permitted to take off the next scheduled work period within twelve (12) hours following the response as a vacation day or sick leave day without loss of pay, if the employee assisted in fighting the fire or search and rescue for more than four (4) hours. If the employee is not entitled to a vacation day or sick leave day, then the employee may be permitted to take off the work period without pay.

(b) The employer may require the employee to submit a written statement from the chief of the volunteer fire department or supervisor of the volunteer canine search and rescue organization verifying that the employee responded to a fire or search and rescue operation or was on call and specifying the date, time, and duration of the response.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.