

1 S.130

2 Introduced by Senators Terenzini, Balint, Baruth, Benning, Champion,  
3 Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Hardy, Hooker, Ingalls,  
4 Kitchel, Lyons, Parent, Pearson, Perchlik, Pollina, Ram, Sears  
5 and Starr

6 Referred to Committee on

7 Date:

8 Subject: Labor; employment practices; fair employment practices; volunteer  
9 emergency responders

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to prohibit  
11 employers from discriminating or retaliating against employees who are absent  
12 from work while performing duties as volunteer emergency responders.

13 An act relating to employment protection for volunteer emergency  
14 responders

15 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

16 Sec. 1. 21 V.S.A. § 495o is added to read:

17 § 495o. VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

18 (a) As used in this section:

19 (1) “Ambulance service” has the same meaning as in 24 V.S.A. § 2651.

20 (2) “Firefighter” has the same meaning as in 20 V.S.A. § 3151.

1           (3) “First responder service” has the same meaning as in 24 V.S.A.  
2           § 2651.

3           (4) “Volunteer emergency medical personnel” means “volunteer  
4           personnel” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2651.

5           (5) “Volunteer emergency responder” means a volunteer firefighter or  
6           volunteer emergency medical personnel.

7           (b) An employer shall not discharge, discriminate, or retaliate against an  
8           employee because the employee was absent from work to perform duty as a  
9           volunteer emergency responder.

10          (c) This section shall not apply to:

11           (1) a public safety agency or provider of emergency medical services if,  
12           as determined by the employer, the employee’s absence would hinder the  
13           availability of public safety or emergency medical services; or

14           (2) an employer that provides goods or services to the general public if  
15           the employee’s absence would require the employer to suspend all business  
16           operations at a location that is open to the general public.

17           (d) An employee who is a volunteer emergency responder shall notify his  
18           or her employer at the time of hire or at the time that the employee becomes a  
19           volunteer emergency responder and shall provide the employer with a written  
20           statement signed by the chief of the volunteer fire department or the designated

1 director or chief of the ambulance service or first responder service stating that  
2 the employee is a volunteer emergency responder.

3 (e) Nothing in this section shall prohibit an employer from requiring an  
4 employee to provide reasonable notice that the employee is leaving work to  
5 respond to an emergency.

6 (f) An employer shall not be required to compensate an employee for time  
7 that an employee is absent from employment while performing his or her duty  
8 as a volunteer emergency responder.

9 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

10 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.