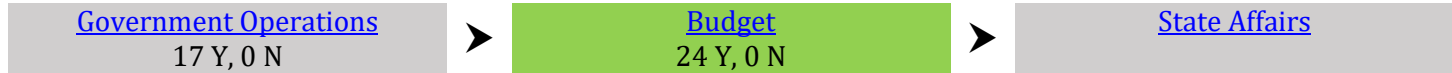


# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

<b>BILL #:</b> <a href="#">HB 749</a> <b>TITLE:</b> Benefits for Firefighters Injured During Training Exercises <b>SPONSOR(S):</b> Sapp	<b>COMPANION BILL:</b> <a href="#">CS/SB 1202</a> (McClain) <b>LINKED BILLS:</b> None <b>RELATED BILLS:</b> None
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## Committee References



## SUMMARY

### **Effect of the Bill:**

The bill expands employer-paid health insurance benefits to cover firefighters who become totally and permanently disabled during an official training exercise, as well as to their spouses and dependent children.

### **Fiscal or Economic Impact:**

The bill may result in a negative fiscal impact on the state and local governments. The fiscal impact is indeterminate at this time, as it depends on the number of full-time firefighters who become totally and permanently disabled due to a catastrophic injury sustained during an official training exercise.

<a href="#">JUMP TO</a>	<a href="#">SUMMARY</a>	<a href="#">ANALYSIS</a>	<a href="#">RELEVANT INFORMATION</a>	<a href="#">BILL HISTORY</a>
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## ANALYSIS

### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The bill requires public employers to pay the full premium of [health insurance coverage for firefighters that suffer catastrophic injury](#) during an official [training](#) exercise. The coverage includes the injured full-time firefighter, his or her spouse, and dependent children. To qualify, the firefighter must be totally and permanently disabled<sup>1</sup> due to the injury. (Section [2](#))

The bill designates this act as the "[Captain Anthony Gillan Act](#)." (Section [1](#))

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025. (Section [3](#))

### **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

#### STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill may result in a negative fiscal impact on the state. The fiscal impact is indeterminate at this time, as it depends on the number of full-time firefighters who become totally and permanently disabled due to a catastrophic injury sustained during an official training exercise.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The bill may result in a negative fiscal impact on local governments. The fiscal impact is indeterminate at this time, as it depends on the number of full-time firefighters who become totally and permanently disabled due to a catastrophic injury sustained during an official training exercise.

<sup>1</sup> The bill does not define the term "totally and permanently disabled"; however, under Florida law, it is generally understood to refer to a person who is unable to engage in substantial employment on a permanent basis. See ss. [121.091\(4\)\(b\)](#), [196.102\(1\)\(d\)](#), and [440.15\(1\), F.S.](#)

**STORAGE NAME:** h0749c.BUC

**DATE:** 3/27/2025

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### [Firefighter Training](#)

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) serves as the State Fire Marshal and operates the Division of the State Fire Marshal (division) within the Department of Financial Services.<sup>2</sup> The division oversees fire prevention and control, including regulation, certification, and training of fire service personnel.<sup>3</sup> It operates through two bureaus: the Bureau of Fire Prevention, which conducts inspections, oversees fire-related industries, and licenses fire suppression personnel; and the Bureau of Fire Standards and Training, which operates the Florida State Fire College<sup>4</sup> and is responsible for firefighter training and certification.

To become a certified firefighter in Florida, applicants must be at least 18, possess a high school diploma or equivalent, have a clean criminal record, submit fingerprints, meet medical and fitness standards, and refrain from using tobacco products for at least a year before applying.<sup>5</sup> They must also complete the Minimum Standards Course.<sup>6</sup>

The Minimum Standards Course consists of two levels: Firefighter I, which covers basic firefighting skills, safety procedures, and emergency response, and Firefighter II, which includes training in hazardous materials handling, live fire exercises, and fireground strategies.<sup>7</sup> The curriculum combines classroom instruction with hands-on practical exercises, covering essential topics such as fire behavior, suppression techniques, building construction, and emergency medical procedures. To complete certification, candidates must pass the Minimum Standards Course Examination within 12 months of finishing the course, demonstrating both written knowledge and practical firefighting skills.<sup>8</sup> Upon passage of the exam, the Firefighter Certificate of Compliance is issued, allowing individuals to work as professional firefighters in Florida.

To maintain certification, firefighters must renew every four years by remaining active in service, completing instructor hours, taking a firefighter retention course, or retaking the Minimum Standards Course examination.<sup>9</sup>

#### [Health Insurance Coverage for Firefighters Who Suffer Catastrophic Injury](#)

Current law requires the employer of a full-time firefighter who suffers a catastrophic injury<sup>10</sup> in the line of duty to pay the full premium of the employer's health insurance plan<sup>11</sup> for the injured firefighter, their spouse, and

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<sup>2</sup> See [s. 633.104\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>3</sup> See [s. 633.128, F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> The Florida State Fire College provides firefighter training, certification, research, and other essential fire safety services. See [s. 633.432, F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> S. [633.412, F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> S. [633.408\(1\)\(a\) and \(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#) Applicants may also complete an equivalent firefighter training program in another state, provided the division determines it meets the requirements of the Minimum Standards Course.

<sup>7</sup> R. 69A-37.055, F.A.C.

<sup>8</sup> S. [633.408\(4\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> S. [633.414\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> "Catastrophic injury" means a permanent impairment constituted by: spinal cord injury involving severe paralysis of an arm, a leg, or the trunk; amputation of an arm, a hand, a foot, or a leg involving the effective loss of use of that appendage; severe brain or closed-head injury; second-degree or third-degree burns of 25 percent or more of the total body surface or third-degree burns of 5 percent or more to the face and hands; total or industrial blindness; or any other injury of a nature and severity that would qualify an employee to receive disability income benefits under Title II or supplemental security income benefits under Title XVI of the federal Social Security Act as the Social Security Act existed on July 1, 1992. S. 440.02(38), F.S. (2002).

<sup>11</sup> Local governments are authorized to provide and fund group insurance, including health, life, accident, and hospitalization coverage, for their employees and dependents, either through private insurers, self-insurance, or risk management consortiums, subject to competitive bidding. S. [112.08\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#) The state offers the state group insurance program, which covers health, life, accident, and hospitalization, for eligible state employees, retirees, and their dependents. S. [110.123, F.S.](#) The term "health insurance plan" does not include supplemental benefits that are not part of the basic group health insurance plan. S. [112.191\(2\)\(g\)1., F.S.](#)

dependent children.<sup>12</sup> To qualify for this benefit, the firefighter’s catastrophic injury must have resulted from responding to an emergency involving life or property protection, or an unlawful act committed by another.<sup>13</sup> If the firefighter later dies from their injuries, the employer must continue covering the health insurance premiums for the surviving spouse until they remarry, and for the dependent children until they turn 18 or, if they remain financially dependent, until the end of the calendar year in which they turn 25.

It is a first-degree misdemeanor to knowingly make or assist in the making of false or misleading statements to obtain the health insurance benefit.<sup>14</sup> In addition to criminal penalties, any firefighter or beneficiary convicted of such fraud must forfeit their health insurance benefits and reimburse the employer for any benefits improperly received.<sup>15</sup>

**Captain Anthony Gillan**

Captain Anthony Gillan has been with Marion County Fire Rescue for 19 years with the last two years serving as the Fire Training Captain. Prior to this role, he was assigned to Ladder 1 and had been a cadre instructor for 12 years within the training division. His instructional contributions include teaching at the Orlando Fire Conference for eight years, focusing on extrication, and teaching at various conferences, including the Fort Lauderdale Fire Expo, Great Lakes HOT, North Florida Fire Conference, Bearers of the Oath Conference, and Treasure Coast HOT. Gillan specializes in company officer development, truck company operations—including forcible entry, search/vent-enter-search, and vertical ventilation—Rapid Intervention Team dynamics, and vehicle extrication.<sup>16</sup>

**BILL HISTORY**

<b>COMMITTEE REFERENCE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF</b>	<b>ANALYSIS PREPARED BY</b>
<a href="#">Government Operations Subcommittee</a>	17 Y, 0 N	3/18/2025	Toliver	Villa
<a href="#">Budget Committee</a>	24 Y, 0 N	3/27/2025	Pridgeon	Perez
<a href="#">State Affairs Committee</a>				

<sup>12</sup> S. [112.191\(2\)\(g\)1, F.S.](#) A person who qualifies for such benefit is ineligible to receive the health insurance subsidy provided in chs. [121](#), [175](#), or [185](#), F.S. In addition, health insurance benefits received from other sources will reduce the amount of employer-paid benefits available to the firefighter and their dependents. See s. [112.191\(2\)\(g\)1.a., F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> S. [112.191\(2\)\(g\)2., F.S.](#)

<sup>14</sup> S. [112.191\(2\)\(g\)1.b., F.S.](#) A first-degree misdemeanor is punishable by imprisonment not to exceed 1 year and a fine not to exceed \$1,000. See ss. [775.082](#) and [775.083, F.S.](#)

<sup>15</sup> S. [112.191\(2\)\(g\)1.c., F.S.](#)

<sup>16</sup> See Build Your Culture, [Anthony Gillan Marion County Fire](#) (last visited March 6, 2025).