

Legislative Analysis



MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER DEFENSE FORCE

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House Bill 5143

Sponsor: Rep. Joel Sheltrown

Committee: Military and Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security

Complete to 9-11-07

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5143 AS INTRODUCED 8-29-07

The bill would amend Section 251 of the Michigan Military Act (MCL 32.651), which authorizes the governor to organize a "defense force" known as the Michigan Emergency Volunteers as necessary to provide adequate emergency assistance to the state. The bill would change the name of the force to the Michigan Volunteer Defense Force, and would update the act to reflect that name change and to outline its duties.

When activated, the Michigan Volunteer Defense Force (MVDF) would perform missions as determined by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in cooperation with the Department of State Police and the state emergency preparedness plan. As was previously the case with emergency volunteers, during times other than a national emergency, the MVDF could not exceed 15 percent of the authorized strength for the Michigan National Guard. (The bill would delete current language that would restrict the volunteer force's missions to those formerly reserved for the National Guard when the Guard had been called into federal service.)

The bill would revive reporting requirements previously in place for the old emergency volunteers. Within one year after House Bill 5143 takes effect and each year thereafter, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs would have to report to the legislative committees on military affairs and to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Reports would have to include: regulations defining and limiting the type and duration of missions; proposals for training and equipment needed to fulfill the missions with a three-year cost projection; requirements, including physical ability, for membership in the MVDF; membership screening procedures, including standards ensuring that no person with a serious criminal record is a member; and a plan detailing methods and procedures for the coordination of operations with the State Police, local law enforcement agencies and state and federal disaster relief authorities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill will have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state and local government. There may be some minimal administrative costs involved with compiling the report and some other possible costs with coordinating the volunteer forces.

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