

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 376 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY OWLETT, PICKETT, LEWIS, RYAN, PETRARCA, PYLE, READSHAW, STEPHENS, SCHLOSSBERG, KAUFFMAN, ROTHMAN, SNYDER, KULIK, McNEILL, ZIMMERMAN, MACKENZIE, STRUZZI, WARREN, HILL-EVANS, LONGIETTI, SAPPEY, OTTEN, JOZWIAK, BERNSTINE, BOBACK, GABLER, BROWN, IRVIN, OBERLANDER, GOODMAN, MURT, KAUFER, DeLUCA, JONES, KEEFER, CIRESI, HAHN, SIMMONS, FARRY AND SAINATO, FEBRUARY 6, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, FEBRUARY 6, 2019

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), entitled "An  
 2 act relating to tax reform and State taxation by codifying  
 3 and enumerating certain subjects of taxation and imposing  
 4 taxes thereon; providing procedures for the payment,  
 5 collection, administration and enforcement thereof; providing  
 6 for tax credits in certain cases; conferring powers and  
 7 imposing duties upon the Department of Revenue, certain  
 8 employers, fiduciaries, individuals, persons, corporations  
 9 and other entities; prescribing crimes, offenses and  
 10 penalties," authorizing a tax credit for a member of a  
 11 volunteer emergency service organization who purchases fire  
 12 equipment with personal income.

13 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

14 (1) It is estimated that more than 90% of Pennsylvania's  
 15 emergency service organizations are volunteer organizations.

16 (2) Volunteer emergency service organizations are  
 17 estimated to save Pennsylvania taxpayers as much as  
 18 \$6,000,000 per year.

19 (3) The ranks of Pennsylvania emergency response  
 20 associations have declined by more than half over the past 20

1 years, from an estimated 152,000 volunteer firefighters in  
2 1985 to 70,000 or fewer today.

3 (4) The potential public safety crisis that looms as a  
4 result of the continuing decline and shortage of active  
5 volunteer emergency responders necessitates the  
6 Commonwealth's active involvement, in partnership with our  
7 local communities, in providing volunteer emergency responder  
8 retention incentives.

9 (5) An income tax credit for active volunteer emergency  
10 responders that purchase their own fire equipment would  
11 provide a small financial token of appreciation for the  
12 invaluable service these dedicated men and women provide.  
13 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
14 hereby enacts as follows:

15 Section 1. The act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as  
16 the Tax Reform Code of 1971, is amended by adding an article to  
17 read:

18 ARTICLE XVIII-H

19 VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY RESPONDER EQUIPMENT

20 TAX CREDIT

21 Section 1801-H. Scope of article.

22 This article relates to volunteer emergency responder  
23 equipment tax credits.

24 Section 1802-H. Definitions.

25 The following words and phrases when used in this article  
26 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
27 context clearly indicates otherwise:

28 "Emergency service organization." A nonprofit chartered fire  
29 company, volunteer ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad  
30 located in this Commonwealth.

1 "Equipment." Acceptable equipment, including helmets,  
2 jackets, protection gear, boots and fire suits.

3 Section 1803-H. Tax credit.

4 A volunteer emergency responder who purchase equipment with  
5 the volunteer emergency responder's personal income may claim a  
6 tax credit of up to \$500 from tax imposed under Article III. If  
7 the volunteer emergency responder's total State income tax  
8 liability is less than \$500, the credit shall equal the  
9 remaining tax liability.

10 Section 1804-H. Proof of eligibility.

11 A volunteer emergency responder who claims a tax credit under  
12 section 1803-H must provide to the Department of Revenue, at the  
13 time the credit is claimed, documentation that the volunteer  
14 emergency responder is an active volunteer of an emergency  
15 service organization and documentation of the type of equipment  
16 purchased and purchase price. The Department of Revenue shall  
17 establish guidelines which provide for acceptable forms of  
18 documentation.

19 Section 1805-H. Limitation.

20 A tax credit claimed by a volunteer emergency responder under  
21 section 1803-H may only be for purchases made during the taxable  
22 year in which the credit is being claimed.

23 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.