

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

HB 562

2025 Regular Session

Fontenot

Proposed law would have authorized fire departments, fire protection districts, and nonprofit corporations under contract with a fire protection district to provide emergency services to seek reimbursement for the reasonable cost of automobile extraction services provided to individuals involved in motor vehicle accidents. Would have provided that costs for automobile extraction services could be recovered from the owner of the vehicle requiring extraction services or the party whose negligence was a cause in fact of the accident which caused the need for vehicle extraction services.

Proposed law would have required fire departments, fire protection districts, or nonprofit corporations who were seeking reimbursement to submit an itemized invoice with corresponding receipts and an explanation of each service for which payment was requested. Would have provided that costs consistent with the values published in schedules by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the use of extraction equipment and associated services would be presumed to be reasonable. Would have prohibited the reimbursement of costs for equipment, supplies, or services which were a part of the normal operating budget or that supplemented the existing budget beyond actual allowable costs. Would have authorized the fire departments, fire protection districts, and nonprofit corporations to use any reasonable means to collect and enforce the collection of such costs.

(Proposed to add R.S. 33:1980.1)

VETO MESSAGE:

"Please be advised I have vetoed House Bill 562 of the 2025 Regular Session by Representative Fontenot. This bill would have allowed fire departments, fire protection districts, and nonprofit groups working with those departments to charge individuals involved in car accidents -regardless of fault - up to \$1,800 for vehicle extrication services, and to pursue those charges through lawsuits or other legal means.

Let me be clear: I have the deepest respect for Louisiana's firefighters and first responders. These men and women are heroes who risk their lives day and night to keep our families safe. Their service is not only noble; it is essential. That is why our laws already recognize fire protection and emergency medical services as fundamental responsibilities of government, central to the health and safety of our people.

But this bill would have opened the door for accident victims - many already shaken, injured, and overwhelmed - to face surprise bills after the fact. This would add financial insult to physical injury, potentially creating a new class of "crash fees" that could burden Louisiana families.

And let us not forget the bigger picture: every time a new charge like this is allowed, it increases the cost of insurance claims. That translates directly into higher insurance premiums for all Louisiana drivers. At a time when families across our State are already struggling with some of the highest auto insurance rates in the country, we simply cannot afford policies that make things worse.

We absolutely must continue to support our first responders; and if fire protection districts or departments need more funding, the law already provides ways to seek local approval through taxes, service charges, or parcel fees. These are decisions best made by the people, not imposed upon them through backdoor billing.

Louisianans are proud to support our firefighters. But we must do so in a way that is transparent, fair, and respectful of the everyday citizens who are already carrying a heavy load. For that reason, I have vetoed House Bill 562."