
***** RANK 2 OF 7, PAGE 1 OF 3, DOCUMENT NUMBER 3
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***** :*****
***** SMOKERS NEED NOT APPLY
***** IF*FIREFIGHTER*BILL SURVIVES

***** All new firefighters in Florida would have to kick the
***** *smoking*habit one year before being hired under a bill that
***** passed a Senate committee Monday.

***** Seventeen Florida communities require newly hired
***** firefighters to be nonsmokers, including Hollywood, Fort
***** Lauderdale, Hialeah and Palm Beach.

***** The bill that cleared the Senate Community Affairs
***** Committee (S 476) goes further and would prevent job-hunters
***** from using tobacco products for one year before filing an
***** application. They would have to submit sworn affidavits. The

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***** restrictions would not apply to firefighters already on the
***** payroll.

***** The bill's sponsor, Sen. Jeanne Malchon, D-St. Petersburg,
***** said *smoking* worsens firefighters' health, which is already
***** threatened by smoke from fires, asbestos and cancer-causing
***** chemicals.

***** Heart disease is a leading cause of death among
***** firefighters, she said.

***** The bill has the support of a statewide firefighters'
***** group, Professional Firefighters of Florida. President Bob
***** Carver said the group's 10,000 members strongly favor a smoke-
***** free fire service.

***** Carver said the bill will save the state money because the
***** state pays worker's compensation to firefighters disabled by
***** heart disease -- and assumes the disease is job-related.

***** The committee passed the bill 5-1, with Chairman Carrie
***** Meek, D-Miami, voting no.

***** Meek said the bill denies firefighters their civil rights.

***** "It's Big Brother sticking his nose under the tent of our
***** activities 24 hours a day," said tobacco industry lobbyist
***** Wilson Wright.

***** Wright challenged a claim by the bill's supporters that a

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***** link exists between *smoking* by firefighters and heart disease.

***** ADDED TERMS: *smoking*ban
***** END OF DOCUMENT.

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