

# **Bond Case Briefs**

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## **PUBLIC EMPLOYEES - LOUISIANA**

### **West Monroe Firefighters Local 1385 v. City Of West Monroe**

**Supreme Court of Louisiana - March 19, 2013 - So.3d - 2012-1937 (La. 3/19/13)**

*Court holds that nothing in the statute governing minimum monthly salaries of firemen in certain municipalities requires the "minimum monthly salary" to independently meet the federal minimum wage laws.*

Louisiana pays firefighters a state supplement of \$500 per month beginning after a firefighter's first year. The legislature in 2006 amended the law to allow a municipality to pay first-year firefighters a supplemental monthly payment "in the amount equivalent to the state supplemental pay, or any portion thereof." City of West Monroe paid a city supplement in the amount of \$300 to its first-year firefighters.

State law sets forth the minimum salaries to be paid to the differing ranks of firefighters, basing the pay differential on specified percentages above the "minimum monthly salary" of a first-year firefighter. The City did not include the \$300 supplemental payment in its computation of the "minimum monthly salary."

City firefighters brought action against city alleging failure to comply with statute setting forth minimum salary requirements for firefighters, and failure to comply with the Louisiana Wage Act

The Supreme Court of Louisiana held that city supplemental pay of \$300 per month to firefighters in their first year of employment was not included in the calculation of a first-year firefighters' "minimum monthly salary" for purposes of determining wage differentials for higher-ranking firefighters.

Nothing in the statute governing minimum monthly salaries of firemen in certain municipalities requires the "minimum monthly salary" to independently meet the federal minimum wage laws. If the legislature had intended for the base pay of firemen to be governed by the mandates of the Fair Labor Standards Act, it could have directly referenced it therein.