

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2770

AS OF FEBRUARY 26, 1992

Brief Description: Providing for health care coverage of corrections employees who are retired early due to permanent disability from an on the job injury.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives H. Myers, Paris, Jones, Winsley and Peery)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Scott Plack (786-7409)

Hearing Dates: February 28, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Total permanent disability awards resulting from offender attack in a correctional facility are rare. Only three cases have been reported since 1984, and none have been awarded since 1989. Correctional employees that are injured on the job are covered, to a limited degree, under Labor and Industries. Correctional employees that are totally permanently disabled are eligible to receive a percentage of their salary for life. They may also qualify for Social Security income, and after a two-year wait may be eligible for Medicare. In addition, assault benefits are available for one full year for employees who sustain a total permanent disability injury on the job, as a result of an offender assault.

Currently, correctional officers who are totally permanently disabled as a result of an on-the-job offender assault lose their health insurance benefits after assault benefits are terminated (one year) and must self pay their health care premiums to cover all non-disability related health problems after their assault benefits run out.

SUMMARY:

Any correctional officer who is assaulted on the job by an offender where the assault results in a total permanent physical, or physical and mental disability, is allowed to continue full participation in his or her state employees' health care plan after receiving disability separation. To qualify for this benefit, the corrections officer is required to have received assault benefits from the state for one full year, received disability separation from the Department of Corrections, and have been determined totally permanently physically or mentally and physically disabled by two

physicians. Premiums for the plan must be paid by the state if no other similar state or federal assistance is provided for that purpose or if the individual reenters the work force and qualifies for similar health benefits.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 19, 1992