

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5044

AS OF JANUARY 28, 1991

Brief Description: Establishing a prima facie presumption that heart disease and cancer are occupational diseases for fire fighters and law enforcement officers.

SPONSORS: Senators West, Gaspard, Roach, Vognild, Erwin, Snyder, Talmadge, Stratton and Johnson.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Don Sloma (786-7414)

Hearing Dates: January 31, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Some studies indicate that fire fighters have a much higher incidence of respiratory and heart disease than the general population. Fire fighters are exposed to extreme heat and cold, smoke, fumes, and toxic substances in the course of their work. Likewise, law enforcement officers are often subject to extreme stress because of potential life-threatening situations in which they are placed.

Many states have statutes which create a presumption that certain illnesses suffered by fire fighters and law enforcement officers are occupational diseases for industrial insurance purposes.

The Joint Select Committee on Industrial Insurance recommended that such a presumption be created for law enforcement officers and fire fighters.

SUMMARY:

There is a rebuttable presumption that heart disease and cancer suffered by fire fighters is occupationally related for industrial insurance purposes. There is a rebuttable presumption that heart disease and cancer suffered by law enforcement officers is occupationally related for industrial insurance purposes. The presumptions only apply to people who established membership in the Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters' Retirement System after September 30, 1977 (LEOFF II). The smoking of tobacco products is to be considered as a factor in rebutting the presumption.

Both presumptions are extended to members following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each year of requisite service. The presumptions may not extend more than 60 months following the last date of employment.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available