

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1219

C 148 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing relief and retirement pension provisions under chapter 41.24 RCW.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (Originally sponsored by Representatives Ogden, Carlson, Conway, Doumit, D. Schmidt, Lantz and Parlette).

House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

The Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension system was created to provide death, disability, medical, and retirement benefits to volunteer fire fighters in cities, towns and fire protection districts. This system is administered and controlled by the State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters and by local boards of trustees.

Although municipalities with volunteer fire fighters or emergency medical workers must participate in the death, disability and medical portions of this system. These municipalities may choose whether to participate in the retirement benefits portion of this system.

Funding for the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension system comes from a variety of sources, including 40 percent of the revenue from the state's fire insurance premiums tax and annual fees paid by participating municipalities and participating volunteer fire fighters, emergency medical workers, and reserve officers.

Reserve Officer Medical Benefit. Under legislation enacted in 1995 and 1998, municipalities have the option of providing the death, disability and retirement benefits of the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension system to their reserve law enforcement officers. The medical provisions of the system are not available to reserve officers.

Death Benefits. The death benefit provisions of the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension system include \$152,000 paid to the surviving spouse or, where there is no surviving spouse, to any surviving dependent children or parents. In addition, the surviving spouse receives \$1,275 per month plus \$110 for each dependent child, to a maximum monthly benefit of \$2,550.

If there is no surviving spouse, \$825 per month is paid for the youngest or only child plus \$70 per month for each additional child, to a maximum monthly benefit of \$1,650. If there is no surviving spouse and no surviving children, a dependent parent receives a benefit of \$825 per month.

Boards of Trustees. Municipalities extending the death and disability provisions to their reserve officers must have a five member reserve officer board of trustees to administer the provisions of the system. Municipalities with volunteer fire fighters must have a five member board of trustees to administer the provisions of the pension and relief system. Emergency medical service districts must have a six member board of trustees to administer the pension and relief system: three members of the county legislative authority or their designees, the county auditor or designee, the head of the emergency medical service district, and one emergency worker from the district to be elected by the emergency workers.

Summary:

Reserve Officer Medical Benefits. Municipalities have the option of providing reserve officers medical benefits under the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension System. The cost of medical benefits will be borne by the municipalities choosing to provide medical coverage under the system.

Death Benefits. The death benefit provided if there is no surviving spouse is increased to \$1,275 per month for the youngest or only child, plus \$110 per month for each additional child, to a maximum monthly benefit of \$2,550. If there are no surviving children or surviving spouse, the benefit received by a dependent parent is increased to \$1,275 per month.

Boards of Trustees. Emergency medical service district boards of trustees must consist of five members, rather than six: two members of the county legislative authority or their designees, the county auditor or designee, the head of the emergency medical service district and one emergency worker to be elected by the emergency workers of the district.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 96 0
Senate 48 0

Effective: July 25, 1999