

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5439

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, February 09, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to domestic partners under the Washington state patrol retirement system.

**Brief Description:** Providing benefits to domestic partners under the Washington state patrol retirement system.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Sheldon, Kauffman, Shin, Kline, McDermott and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/05/09, 2/09/09 [DPS, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5439 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Berkey, Eide, Jarrett, Kauffman, Kilmer, King, Ranker and Sheldon.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Becker and Benton.

**Staff:** Dory Nicpon (786-7321)

**Background:** Chapter 156 of the Laws of 2007 created a state domestic partnership registry at the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS), and extended certain property, probate, intestacy, and health care powers and rights to state-registered domestic partners.

The Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) pays certain retirement and death benefits to the surviving spouses of its members.

The surviving spouse of a WSPRS member who is killed in the line of duty is eligible to purchase health care benefits from the Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB) and receive reimbursement for the cost of participating in the PEBB health insurance plan.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** Throughout WSPRS provisions relating to retirement and death benefits, references to "surviving spouse" are amended to include "or state-registered domestic partner;" references to "marriage" are amended to include "or state-registered domestic partnership," and references to "ex spouse" are amended to include "or former state-registered domestic partner."

A WSPRS member's state-registered domestic partner is added to the list of survivors who are eligible to purchase health care benefits from PEBB, and receive reimbursement for the cost of participating in a PEBB health insurance plan.

As used throughout the WSPRS provisions, "state-registered domestic partners" is defined as two adults who meet the requirements for a valid state-registered domestic partnership, and who have been issued a certificate by OSOS.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available. New fiscal note requested on February 4, 2009.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill addresses an oversight in prior legislative enactments, and is the right thing to do.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Tom Pillow, Rick Jensen, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association; Dave Scherf, Steve Sutton, Washington State Patrol Lieutenants Association; Captain Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol.