

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1194

As of March 20, 2015

Title: An act relating to the death benefits of a surviving spouse of a member of the law enforcement officers' and firefighters' retirement system or the state patrol retirement system.

Brief Description: Addressing the death benefits of a surviving spouse of a member of the law enforcement officers' and firefighters' retirement system or the state patrol retirement system.

Sponsors: House Committee on Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Kirby, Holy, Van De Wege, Hayes, Stokesbary, Fitzgibbon and Bergquist; by request of LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/04/15, 89-9.

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 3/25/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) provides retirement, disability, and death benefits to law enforcement officers and firefighters. Similarly the Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) provides retirement, disability, and death benefits to commissioned officers of the Washington State Patrol.

Workers injured in the course of employment are entitled to industrial insurance benefits. If death results from the injury, the surviving spouse receives a monthly benefit based on the wages of the deceased spouse. If the surviving spouse remarries, the benefit is discontinued, and the spouse may choose to receive a lump sum of 24 times the monthly rate, or have the monthly benefit resume if the remarriage is terminated. In 2010 legislation was enacted increasing the lump sum option for surviving spouses of a member of LEOFF and WSPRS to 36 times the monthly rate.

Summary of Bill: A new benefit is created for surviving spouses under the LEOFF Plan 2 and WSPRS systems. The benefit is payable to surviving spouses who are ineligible to receive the surviving spouse benefit under the state industrial insurance program because of remarriage. The amount of the benefit is equal to the industrial insurance benefit the

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surviving spouse would have received but for the remarriage, less an actuarially reduced amount if the spouse elected to receive a lump sum payment prior to the remarriage.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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