

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6646

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As of February 1, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to the survivor benefits of employees who die while honorably serving in the national guard or military reserves during a period of war.

**Brief Description:** Addressing the survivor benefits of employees who die while honorably serving in the national guard or military reserves during a period of war.

**Sponsors:** Senators Pridemore, Carrell, Schoesler, Fraser, Holmquist, McAuliffe, Marr, Shin, Stevens, Kohl-Welles, Roach and Rasmussen; by request of Select Committee on Pension Policy and LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Ways & Means: 1/31/08.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Erik Sund (786-7454)

**Background:** The Washington state retirement systems provide survivors of deceased members a variety of benefits, varying with both plan provisions and individual earned benefit amounts. Survivors of members that die from injuries sustained in the course of their state employment are entitled to a lump-sum death benefit of \$150,000 from their retirement plan, and a survivor annuity that is not reduced for the age of the member. Survivors of members that die from non-duty related causes are generally entitled to either a refund of member contributions or an actuarially reduced survivor annuity – this is the survivor benefit to which members that have left state service for military duty are entitled.

The spouses and qualified dependents of members of the military killed while on duty are eligible for federal government benefits, including a one-time tax free benefit of \$100,000 and a monthly stipend of \$1,067 plus an additional \$265 per dependant indexed to the consumer price index. Military employees are also generally covered by at least \$250,000 of life insurance, which members must opt-out of if they do not want to participate in the plan.

**Summary of Bill:** The survivor of a member of the Public Employees', Teachers', School Employees', Public Safety Employees', Washington State Patrol, or Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement Systems (PERS, TRS, SERS, PSERS, WSPRS, OR LEOFF) who left the employ of a retirement system-covered employer due to service in the national guard or military reserves, and who died while honorably serving in a defined period of war, is entitled to a survivor annuity that is unreduced for the age of the member between the age at death and the retirement age of the deceased member's retirement plan.

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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.*

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** No one.