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**SENATE BILL 6197**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Keiser, Baumgartner, Hasegawa, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to an employer's payment of indebtedness upon the death of an employee; and amending RCW 49.48.120.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 49.48.120 and 2003 c 122 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) If at the time of the death of any person, his or her employer is indebted to him or her for work, labor, and services performed, and no executor or administrator of his or her estate has been appointed, the employer shall upon the request of the surviving spouse pay the indebtedness in an amount as may be due not exceeding the sum of two thousand five hundred dollars, to the surviving spouse, or if the decedent leaves no surviving spouse, then to the decedent's child or children, or if no children, then to the decedent's father or mother.

(2) In the event the decedent's employer is the state of Washington or a municipal corporation, as defined in RCW 39.50.010, then there shall be no limit to the amount of the indebtedness that can be paid under subsection (1) of this section ((~~shall not exceed ten thousand dollars. At the beginning of each biennium, the director of financial management may by administrative policy adjust the amount of indebtedness that can be paid under this subsection to levels not to exceed the percentage increase in the consumer price index for all urban consumers, CPI-U, for Seattle, or a successor index, for the previous biennium as calculated by the United States department of labor. Adjusted dollar amounts of indebtedness shall be rounded to the nearest five hundred dollar increment~~)).

(3) If the decedent and the surviving spouse have entered into a community property agreement that meets the requirements of RCW 26.16.120, and the right to the indebtedness became the sole property of the surviving spouse upon the death of the decedent, the employer shall pay to the surviving spouse the total of the indebtedness, or that portion which is governed by the community property agreement, upon presentation of the agreement accompanied by an affidavit or declaration of the surviving spouse stating that the agreement was executed in good faith between the parties and had not been rescinded by the parties before the decedent's death.

(4) In all cases, the employer shall require proof of the claimant's relationship to the decedent by affidavit or declaration, and shall require the claimant to acknowledge receipt of the payment in writing.

(5) Any payments made by an employer pursuant to the provisions of RCW 49.48.115 and ((~~49.48.120~~)) this section shall operate as a full and complete discharge of the employer's indebtedness to the extent of the payment, and no employer shall thereafter be liable to the decedent's estate, or the decedent's executor or administrator thereafter appointed.

(6) The employer may also pay the indebtedness upon presentation of an affidavit as provided in RCW 11.62.010.

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