

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6263

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 2, 2024

Title: An act relating to death benefits provided by the 1955 act for firefighters' relief and pensions.

Brief Description: Concerning death benefits provided by the 1955 act for firefighters' relief and pensions.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, L., Boehnke, Cleveland, Conway, Keiser, Lovelett, Lovick, Rivers, Schoesler, Torres and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 1/23/24, 2/02/24 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the funeral benefit for firefighters covered by a pre-Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System pension from \$500 to \$1,000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Robinson, Chair; Mullet, Vice Chair, Capital; Nguyen, Vice Chair, Operating; Wilson, L., Ranking Member, Operating; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Schoesler, Ranking Member, Capital; Rivers, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Billig, Boehnke, Braun, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Muzzall, Pedersen, Randall, Saldaña, Torres, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Wellman.

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7460)

Background: The Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System

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

(LEOFF) Plan 1 provides retirement and disability benefits to law enforcement officers and firefighters who entered eligible employment between 1969 and 1977. Since 1977 eligible law enforcement officers and firefighters have entered LEOFF Plan 2. Before the implementation of LEOFF Plan 1 in 1970 law enforcement and firefighter pensions were administered separately by local pension boards and chapters of law.

At the time of death of a firefighter covered by a pre-LEOFF pension, the pension fund will pay \$500 to defray funeral expenses.

A death benefit available to law enforcement officers covered by a pre-LEOFF pension that worked for a city pays \$1,000 to the spouse or other specified beneficiaries.

Summary of Bill: The funeral benefit for firefighters covered by a pre-LEOFF pension is increased from \$500 to \$1,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This will correct the discrepancy and line up the benefit for firefighters and law enforcement officers. This increase is long overdue and was last increased in 1961. A typical funeral costs more than \$7,000.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lynda Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Anne McEnery-Ogle, Mayor of Vancouver; Michael Duchemin, Retired Firefighters of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.