

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1004

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Adjusting disability payments.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Morris and Doumit).

**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

**Background:**

The Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension System (VFFRPS) provides death, disability, medical, and retirement benefits to volunteer fire fighters and reserve officers in cities, towns, and fire protection districts. The State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters administers this system. The system is funded by member and employer contributions and a portion of the fire insurance premiums tax.

A volunteer firefighter disabled as a result of performing his or her duties receives a disability benefit from the VFFRPS. The State Board for Volunteer Fire Fighters determines the extent to which a disability qualifies for the benefit. For the first six months of a disability, the system pays a monthly disability benefit equal to the lesser of the disabled participant's monthly salary at his or her regular job or a dollar amount of \$2,550. After the first six months the disability benefit is \$1,275 per month. Additional amounts are granted if the member has a spouse or children, up to a maximum monthly allowance of \$2,550.

When a VFFRPS member is killed in the line of duty, the VFFRPS also provides survivor benefits for the member's spouse or designee. The designated survivors receive \$152,000 as a death benefit, and \$1,275 per month as a lifetime annuity (with additional compensation where there are dependent children). The lifetime annuity may not exceed a monthly maximum of \$2,550 per month.

Both the disability and survivor benefit amounts are set in statute and do not automatically increase to account for inflation.

**Summary:**

The maximum disability payments and survivor benefits in the VFFRPS are increased annually, beginning July 1, 2001. The increase is equal to the percentage change in the

annual average Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers between the prior year and the year preceding that.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 97 0

Senate 49 0

**Effective:** May 2, 2001