

1 **Line-of-Duty Death Benefit Amendments**

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Derrin R. Owens**

House Sponsor: Douglas R. Welton

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3 **LONG TITLE**

4 **General Description:**

5 This bill modifies provisions relating to benefits resulting from a line-of-duty death.

6 **Highlighted Provisions:**

7 This bill:

8 ▶ provides that the health, dental, and vision benefits available to a public safety employee  
9 or fire service employee who dies in the line of duty remain available to the employee's

10 surviving spouse and children;

11 ▶ subject to legislative appropriation, directs the Department of Public Safety to reimburse  
12 an employer for amounts paid for the first 12 months of certain benefits provided to the  
13 surviving spouse and children of a public safety service employee or fire service  
14 employee who dies in the line of duty; and

15 ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

16 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

17 None

18 **Other Special Clauses:**

19 None

20 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

21 AMENDS:

22 **53-17-201**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2017, Chapter 269

23 **53-17-401**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2017, Chapter 269

24 **53-17-402**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2021, Chapter 382

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26 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

27 Section 1. Section **53-17-201** is amended to read:

28 **53-17-201 . Surviving spouse and children health, dental, and vision coverage for**  
29 **line-of-duty death.**

30 (1)(a) Subject to Subsection (1)(b), and in accordance with this section, an employer

31 shall allow the surviving spouse and children of a member whose death is classified  
 32 by the Utah State Retirement Office as a line-of-duty death under the provisions of  
 33 Title 49, Utah State Retirement and Insurance Benefit Act, to remain eligible for [  
 34 ~~health coverage under the employer's group health plan~~] the following, if offered by  
 35 the employer, as if the surviving spouse was an employee of the employer[-] :

36 (i) health coverage;

37 (ii) dental coverage; and

38 (iii) vision coverage.

39 ~~[(b) The employer shall pay 100% of the premium costs and, if the health coverage is a~~  
 40 ~~high-deductible plan, the employer share of any contribution into a health savings~~  
 41 ~~account for the surviving spouse and dependent children as described under~~  
 42 ~~Subsections (1)(a) and (2), and may not require payment from the surviving spouse~~  
 43 ~~for premium costs or health savings account contributions as a condition of~~  
 44 ~~qualifying to continue to receive the health coverage.]~~

45 (b) Except as provided in Subsection (1)(d), the employer shall pay:

46 (i) 100% of the premium costs for the coverage described in Subsection (1)(a); and

47 (ii) if the health coverage is a high-deductible plan, the employer share of any  
 48 contribution into a health savings account for the surviving spouse and dependent  
 49 children as described under Subsections (1)(a) and (2).

50 (c) The employer may not require payment from the surviving spouse for premium costs  
 51 or health savings account contributions as a condition of qualifying to continue to  
 52 receive the coverage described in Subsection (1)(a).

53 ~~[(e)]~~ (d)(i) For the first 12 months after the line-of-duty death, the employer shall pay  
 54 the amount specified under Subsection (1)(b).

55 (ii) The department shall reimburse an employer for any amount paid under  
 56 Subsection (1)(d)(i).

57 ~~[(d)]~~ (e) Beginning 13 months after the line-of-duty death, an employer may pay the  
 58 amount specified under Subsection (1)(b) through a cost-sharing agreement under  
 59 Section 53-17-301 associated with the trust fund created under Section 53-17-401.

60 (2) An employer shall allow a surviving spouse and children to remain eligible to receive [  
 61 ~~health~~]coverage from the employer under this section at the option of the surviving  
 62 spouse:

63 (a) ~~[for health coverage]~~for the surviving spouse, until the surviving spouse becomes  
 64 eligible for Medicare; and

- 65 (b) for ~~[health coverage of]~~ a child, until the child reaches the age of 26.
- 66 (3) This section does not apply to ~~[a member who]~~:
- 67 (a) a member who does not qualify for a line-of-duty death benefit under Title 49, Utah
- 68 State Retirement and Insurance Benefit Act;
- 69 (b) coverage for which, at the time of death, the member did not receive or qualify to
- 70 receive ~~[employer group health coverage]~~; or
- 71 (c) a member who is covered under Section 49-20-406.
- 72 Section 2. Section **53-17-401** is amended to read:
- 73 **53-17-401 . Local Public Safety and Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust Fund.**
- 74 (1) There is created a private purpose trust fund entitled the "Local Public Safety and
- 75 Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust Fund."
- 76 (2) The trust fund consists of:
- 77 (a) fees established in Subsection 53-17-402(2)(a);
- 78 (b) appropriations made to the fund by the Legislature, if any;
- 79 (c) private donations and grants; and
- 80 (d) other revenue received from other sources.
- 81 (3) The ~~[Department of Public Safety]~~ department:
- 82 (a) shall account for the receipt and expenditures of trust fund money; or
- 83 (b) may enter into contract with a third-party administrator to administer the fund and
- 84 account for the receipt and expenditure of trust fund money.
- 85 (4) The trust fund shall earn interest.
- 86 (5) The revenue and interest in the account, less actual administrative costs to the
- 87 department, shall be used to lower fees paid by an employer under Section 53-17-201.
- 88 (6) The board of trustees created in Section 53-17-402 may expend money from the trust
- 89 fund:
- 90 ~~[(a) for health coverage for a surviving spouse and children under Subsection~~
- 91 ~~53-17-201(1)(d) by paying:]~~
- 92 ~~[(i) premium costs; or]~~
- 93 ~~[(ii) if the health coverage is a high-deductible plan, premium costs and the employer~~
- 94 ~~contribution to a health savings account; and]~~
- 95 (a) as provided in Subsection 53-17-201(1)(e); and
- 96 (b) for reasonable administrative costs that the department and the board of trustees
- 97 incur in performing their duties for administering the trust fund.
- 98 (7) Money deposited into the trust fund is irrevocable and is expended only for the purposes

99 described in this chapter.

100 (8) Assets of the trust fund are dedicated for the purposes established by statute and  
101 administrative rule.

102 (9) Creditors of the board of trustees and of employers liable for the benefits paid under this  
103 chapter may not seize, attach, or otherwise obtain assets of the trust fund.

104 Section 3. Section **53-17-402** is amended to read:

105 **53-17-402 . Local Public Safety and Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust Fund**  
106 **Board of Trustees -- Quorum -- Duties -- Establish rates.**

107 (1)(a) There is created the Local Public Safety and Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust  
108 Fund Board of Trustees composed of four members:

- 109 (i) the commissioner of public safety or the commissioner's designee;  
110 (ii) the executive director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget or the  
111 executive director's designee;  
112 (iii) one person representing municipalities, designated by the Utah League of Cities  
113 and Towns; and  
114 (iv) one person representing counties, designated by the Utah Association of  
115 Counties.

116 (b) The commissioner of public safety, or the commissioner's designee, is chair of the  
117 board.

118 (c) Three members of the board are a quorum.

119 (d) A member may not receive compensation or benefits for the member's service, but  
120 may receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with:

- 121 (i) Section 63A-3-106;  
122 (ii) Section 63A-3-107; and  
123 (iii) rules made by the Division of Finance according to Sections 63A-3-106 and  
124 63A-3-107.

125 (e)(i) The [~~Department of Public Safety~~] department shall staff the board of trustees.

126 (ii) The department shall provide accounting services for the trust fund.

127 (2) The board shall:

128 (a) establish rates to charge each employer based on the number of public safety service  
129 employees and firefighter service employees who are eligible for the health, dental,  
130 and vision coverage under this chapter;

131 (b) act as trustee of the trust fund and exercise the state's fiduciary responsibilities;

132 (c) meet at least once per year;

- 133 (d) review and approve all policies, projections, rules, criteria, procedures, forms,  
134 standards, performance goals, and actuarial reports;
- 135 (e) review and approve the budget for the trust fund;
- 136 (f) review financial records of the trust fund, including trust fund receipts, expenditures,  
137 and investments;
- 138 (g) commission and obtain financial or actuarial studies of the liabilities for the trust  
139 fund;
- 140 (h) calculate and approve administrative expenses of the trust fund; and
- 141 (i) do any other things necessary to perform the fiduciary obligations under the trust.

142 Section 4. **Effective Date.**

143 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.