

SESSION OF 2013

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 152

As Recommended by Senate Committee on
Financial Institutions and Insurance

Brief*

SB 152 would enact new law to require state agencies and municipalities to pay premiums for continuation of coverage under COBRA for the surviving spouse and eligible dependent children of a law enforcement officer who dies in the line of duty. The law applying to continuation coverage for firefighters' surviving spouses and dependent children would be updated by the bill.

The payment of premiums for COBRA continuation coverage would be paid for 18 months and would be required only if the deceased law enforcement officer was enrolled in a health benefit plan for which a state agency or municipality was paying premiums. A state agency or municipality would not be required to pay the premiums for a surviving spouse:

- On or after the end of the 18th calendar month after the date of the deceased law enforcement officer's death;
- Upon the remarriage of the deceased law enforcement officer's surviving spouse; or
- Upon the deceased law enforcement officer's surviving spouse reaching the age of 65.

The bill also would amend current law relating to continuation of coverage for dependent children of firefighters who die in the line of duty. The bill would delete criteria that

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

generally describes a dependent child and instead would specify coverage would be provided to “eligible” dependent children under the age of 26 years. (The federal Affordable Care Act requires health insurance plans and issuers that offer dependent coverage to make the coverage available until a child reaches the age of 26 years.)

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Proponents present at the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee meeting included a representative of the Kansas Associations of Chiefs of Police, the Kansas Sheriffs Association and the Kansas Peace Officers Association; a representative of the Kansas Fraternal Order of Police (Topeka Lodge #3); and a private citizen who had experience in emergency medical service and nursing. The proponents indicated the payment of the continued health insurance coverage would provide some time for the officers’ families to start the recovery process and to develop and prepare new financial plans, with the short-term cost resulting in a long-term benefit for the families and the community.

There were no opponents to the bill.

The fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget indicates the number of law enforcement and firefighters who have died in the line of duty with surviving spouses and children under the age of 26 during calendar year 2012 is not known. The enactment of the bill would require additional expenditures by both state agencies and municipalities for additional health insurance premiums for eligible spouses and children under the age of 26; however, the amount of the increase cannot be estimated. Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2014 Governor’s Budget Report*.

Information submitted by a representative of the Kansas Associations of Chiefs of Police, the Kansas Sheriffs Association, and the Kansas Peace Officers Association to the Senate Committee indicated, in the past ten years, 12 Kansas law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty, by gunfire or accident. One individual worked for the state, four for a city, and seven for a sheriff's office.