

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1479

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**As Passed House:**

March 9, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to providing a death benefit for certain state employees.

**Brief Description:** Providing a death benefit for certain state employees.

**Sponsors:** By Representatives Alexander, Grant, Barlean, Rockefeller, Ericksen, Campbell, Romero, Fromhold, Buck, H. Sommers, Bush, Doumit, Conway, Lantz, Kessler, Pennington, Hatfield, Clements, Cox, Benson, Santos, Kenney, Cooper, Kagi, O'Brien, Simpson, Armstrong, Dunshee, Linville, Schual-Berke, D. Schmidt, Cairnes, Morris, Ogden, Roach, Keiser, Schoesler, G. Chandler, Lovick, McIntire, Hunt, Hurst, Quall, Jackley, Carrell, Mulliken, Edmonds, Jarrett, Woods and Wood.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Appropriations: 2/8/01, 2/21/01 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/9/01, 98-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Provides a \$150,000 death benefit to the survivors of members of the Public Employees' Retirement System, Teachers' Retirement System, and the School Employees' Retirement System who die in the course of employment.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Sehlin, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Lisk, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Benson, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Cox, Dunshee, Fromhold, Gombosky, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Kessler, Lambert, Linville, Mastin, McIntire, Mulliken, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Tokuda.

**Staff:** Andrea Hardy (786-7349).

**Background:**

In 1996 the Legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5322 (Chapter 226, Laws of 1996), which provides an additional \$150,000 duty-related death benefit to survivors of members of Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters and Washington State Patrol Retirement Systems. The duty-related death benefit is paid only where death occurs as a result of injuries sustained in the course of employment. The Department of Labor and Industries determines eligibility for the benefit. There is no time limit following the injury from which the death must result.

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**Summary of Bill:**

Surviving spouses, designees, or legal representatives of the Public Employees' Retirement System, Teachers' Retirement System, and the School Employees' Retirement System members (all plans) receive a benefit of \$150,000 for the death of the member as a result of injuries sustained in the course of employment.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** It is important to recognize employees who give their lives in the line of duty. Providing a death benefit for families of these survivors may grant some measure of comfort, and it would demonstrate the value the state places in the work that state employees do.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Alexander, prime sponsor; Lynn McKinnon and Gary Sprague, Washington Public Employees Association; Bob Maier and Helen Carlstrom, Washington Education Association; Jamila Thomas Roberts, Washington Federation of State Employees; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of Teachers; and Captain Eric Robertson, Washington State Patrol.