

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Overview

Senate CS for CS for HB 23 (FIN)

version: N

Overview: SCS HB 23 (FIN) creates the peace officer and firefighter survivors' fund to pay medical insurance premiums to continue health insurance coverage for an eligible surviving spouse or dependent child of a peace officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty. The benefit is only available to a surviving dependent of a permanent, full-time employee who was covered by employer-sponsored medical insurance at the time of death. The premium payments will allow surviving dependents to remain in their current health plan and are paid to the applicable employer medical insurance provider.

The state is required to pay the benefit for state employees; a municipality may elect to participate by entering into an agreement with the state to pay the cost of the program for its recipients. By December 1, the commissioner of public safety will determine the amount needed to pay the premiums and associated administrative costs. Once appropriated, funds do not lapse and can be spent without further appropriation.

A surviving dependent is "presumed eligible" for 60 days after the death of the peace officer or firefighter, to allow time for the dependent to get documents together and apply for the benefit. Within 30 days of the application, the commissioner shall determine eligibility; which is reconfirmed annually.

Surviving spouses are eligible to receive the benefit for 10 years, until eligible to receive other major medical coverage, or until eligible for Medicare. If a surviving spouse is the parent of an eligible child, the spouse can continue to receive the benefit until the child is no longer eligible.

Except for a child who is totally and permanently disabled, a surviving child is eligible to receive the benefit until eligible to receive other major medical coverage or age 26.

Surviving dependents who become ineligible due to receiving other major medical coverage can reapply for benefits if that coverage is lost.

The definition of "peace officer" is identical to the definition in CS SB 48 (STA).

The fund is eligible for donations through "Pick, Click, Give."