

ASSEMBLY, No. 557

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman ROBERT AUTH
District 39 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes housing expense reimbursements for families of certain public safety officers killed in line of duty.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** establishing housing assistance for the families of certain
2 fallen public safety officers, and supplementing chapter 18A of
3 Title 52 of the Revised Statutes and chapter 9 of Title 54A of the
4 New Jersey Statutes.

5

6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7 *of New Jersey:*

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9 1. a. The surviving spouse of a State, county, or municipal
10 police officer, including a member of the Division of State Police or
11 special law enforcement officer; firefighter, whether volunteer or
12 paid; sheriff's officer; or corrections officer, who was killed in the
13 line of duty, may apply to the State Treasurer for reimbursement of
14 any rent or mortgage payments and property taxes due and owing
15 on the domicile of the surviving spouse, up to a maximum of
16 \$15,000, for each year in which any dependent children reside in
17 the domicile until and including the year in which the youngest
18 child graduates from secondary school or, if that child enrolls as an
19 undergraduate student at an institution of higher education, until
20 and including the last year in which the child remains enrolled as a
21 full-time matriculating undergraduate student at such an institution.

22 b. The State Treasurer shall remit a reimbursement pursuant to
23 subsection a. of this section, from the "Fallen Public Safety Officer
24 Surviving Spouse Housing Assistance Fund" established by section
25 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
26 bill), upon approval of an application of a surviving spouse that
27 establishes eligibility for a reimbursement pursuant to this section.
28 The application shall include information and documents as may be
29 reasonably prescribed by the State Treasurer for the purposes of
30 determining the eligibility of a surviving spouse.

31 c. A reimbursement pursuant to subsection a. of this section
32 shall not be considered income for purposes of the "New Jersey
33 Gross Income Tax Act," N.J.S.54A:1-1 et seq.

34 d. As used in this section, "in the line of duty" means actively
35 engaged in the detection, investigation, apprehension, arrest, or
36 detention of persons violating the criminal laws of the State; the
37 discharge of emergency services; firefighting; or the discharge of
38 inmate supervision and control responsibilities.

39

40 2. a. There is established in the Department of the Treasury a
41 special fund to be known as the "Fallen Public Safety Officer
42 Surviving Spouse Housing Assistance Fund."

43 b. Each taxpayer shall have the opportunity to indicate on the
44 taxpayer's New Jersey gross income tax return that a portion of the
45 taxpayer's tax refund or an enclosed contribution shall be deposited
46 into the special fund.

47 c. Any costs incurred by the Division of Taxation for collection
48 or administration attributable to this section may be deducted from

1 receipts collected pursuant to this section, as determined by the
2 Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting. The State
3 Treasurer shall deposit net contributions collected pursuant to this
4 section into the “Fallen Public Safety Officer Surviving Spouse
5 Housing Assistance Fund.”
6 d. The Legislature shall annually appropriate all funds
7 deposited in the “Fallen Public Safety Officer Surviving Spouse
8 Housing Assistance Fund” established pursuant to this section, and
9 other funds as may be necessary, to the Department of the Treasury
10 for the purposes of providing reimbursements to all qualified
11 surviving spouse applicants pursuant to section 1 of
12 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

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14 3. This act shall take effect immediately.
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17 STATEMENT
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19 This bill would provide housing assistance, in the form of
20 reimbursements, to the surviving spouses of public safety officers,
21 including police officers, firefighters, and sheriff’s and corrections
22 officers, who were killed in the line of duty, for as long as
23 dependent children continue to reside with the surviving spouse
24 through high school or college. These public safety officers have
25 made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their communities, and
26 their families deserve the support of the State to ensure that they
27 can remain in their current homes until the youngest child residing
28 in the home has graduated from high school or college, if attended.

29 The reimbursements would cover rent or mortgage payments and
30 property taxes due and owing on the home of the surviving spouse
31 up to \$15,000 for each year of eligibility. The bill enables the
32 collection of voluntary contributions through gross income tax
33 returns to support these reimbursements.