

ASSEMBLY, No. 5261

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Stanfield

SYNOPSIS

Provides accidental death benefit to surviving spouse, surviving child, or surviving parent of a State Police recruit who dies during required pre-service training.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/25/2021)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the accidental death benefit in the State Police
2 Retirement System and supplementing P.L.1965, c.89 (C.53:5A-1
3 et seq.).

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

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8 1. a. For the purposes of subsection a. of section 14 of P.L.1965,
9 c.89 (C.53:5A-14) and notwithstanding the provisions of section 5 of
10 P.L.1965, c.89 (C.53:5A-5) or any other law, rule, or regulation to
11 the contrary, a death of a State Police recruit during any required pre-
12 service training, or complications therefrom, at the New Jersey State
13 Police Academy shall be deemed to have occurred as the result of an
14 accident met by a member in the actual performance of duty at some
15 definite time and place.

16 b. If a State Police recruit died during pre-service training or
17 complications therefrom, prior to the enactment of P.L. , c. (C)
18 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a surviving spouse,
19 surviving child, or surviving parent may apply to receive the
20 accidental death benefits as set forth in section 14 of P.L.1965, c.89
21 (C.53:5A-14) and, if approved, the benefits under this section shall
22 be made retroactive to the date of the death of the State Police recruit.
23 The surviving spouse, surviving child, or surviving parent shall have
24 no more than 12 months following the enactment of P.L. , c. (C)
25 (pending before the Legislature as this bill) to file an accident report
26 with the State Police Retirement System and an application for an
27 accidental death benefit pursuant to this section.

28 c. A pension paid in accordance with this section to the
29 surviving spouse shall not be less than \$50,000. If there is no
30 surviving spouse, a final compensation of not less than \$50,000 shall
31 be used to calculate the death benefit to the surviving child or
32 surviving parent, as the case may be. If there is no surviving spouse
33 or in case the spouse dies, 70 percent of final compensation shall be
34 payable to the surviving child or surviving children in equal shares.
35 If there is no surviving spouse or child, 25 percent of final
36 compensation shall be payable to one surviving parent or 40 percent
37 of final compensation shall be payable to two surviving parents in
38 equal shares.

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40 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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45 Under current law, State Police recruits are not sworn members of
46 the New Jersey State Police until the recruits complete the required
47 training and graduate from the New Jersey State Police Academy. As

1 a result, the death cannot be classified as a death of a member and
2 therefor benefits cannot be provided to the survivors.

3 This bill classifies the death of a State Police recruit who dies
4 during required pre-servicing training, or complications therefrom,
5 as a death in the line of duty and provides an accidental death benefit
6 to the surviving spouse, surviving child, or surviving parent of the
7 State Police recruit. Under the bill, the benefit paid to the surviving
8 spouse must be at least \$50,000. The bill provides that if there is no
9 surviving spouse, a final compensation of at least \$50,000 would be
10 used to calculate the death benefit to the surviving child or surviving
11 parent, as the case may be.

12 On December 1, 2020, Lucas C. Homeijer, 27, of Boonton,
13 succumbed to injuries sustained during a training exercise at the New
14 Jersey State Police Academy. Mr. Homeijer, the son and nephew of
15 retired troopers, was an Eagle Scout, a past attendee of Trooper
16 Youth Week, and a member of the 161st Class of the New Jersey
17 State Police Academy. It is the sponsor's belief that this bill will
18 honor the commitment and sacrifices of State Police recruits who die
19 while training to become State Troopers.