

SENATE, No. 3348

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

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.



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

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39 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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44 Under current law, State Police recruits are not sworn members of
45 the New Jersey State Police until the recruits complete the required
46 training and graduate from the New Jersey State Police Academy. As
47 a result, the death cannot be classified as a death of a member and
48 therefor benefits cannot be provided to the survivors.

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

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