1	S.89
2	Introduced by Senator Vyhovsky
3	Referred to Committee on
4	Date:
5	Subject: Public safety; survivors' benefits
6	Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to extend
7	survivors' benefits to survivors of law enforcement officers, Department of
8	Corrections employees, Family Services Division employees, and employees
9	in State-operated therapeutic community residences or inpatient psychiatric
10	hospital units who die while in the line of duty or from an occupation-related
11	illness.
12	An act relating to expanding survivor benefits
13	It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:
14	Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE
15	This act may be cited as "Jessica's Law."
16	Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 3171 is amended to read:
17	§ 3171. DEFINITIONS
18	As used in this chapter:
19	* * *

1	(3) "Emergency personnel" means:
2	(A) firefighters as defined in subdivision 3151(3) of this title; and
3	(B) emergency medical personnel and volunteer personnel as defined
4	in 24 V.S.A. § 2651 <u>;</u>
5	(C) law enforcement officers who have been certified by the Vermont
6	Criminal Justice Council pursuant to section 2358 of this title;
7	(D) facility employees of the Department of Corrections and
8	Department of Corrections employees who provide direct security and
9	treatment services to offenders under supervision in the community;
10	(E) classified employees of the Family Services Division of the
11	Department for Children and Families; and
12	(F) classified employees of State-operated therapeutic community
13	residences or inpatient psychiatric hospital units.
14	(4) "Line of duty" means:
15	(A) answering or returning from with respect to firefighters,
16	emergency medical personnel, and volunteer personnel:
17	(i) service in answer to a call of the department or service for a
18	fire or emergency or, including going to and returning from a fire or
19	emergency or participating in a fire or emergency training drill; or
20	(B)(ii) similar service in another town or district to which the
21	department or service has been called for firefighting or emergency purposes.;

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1	(B) with respect to law enforcement officers:
2	(i) service as a law enforcement officer in answer to a complaint
3	lodged with the department or in response to a disorder, including going to,
4	returning from, and investigating or responding to the complaint or disorder; or
5	(ii) service under orders from the department or in any emergency
6	for which the law enforcement officer serves as a law enforcement officer;
7	(C) with respect to covered employees of the Department of
8	Corrections, discharging their duties as employees;
9	(D) with respect to classified employees of the Family Services
10	Division of the Department for Children and Families, discharging their duties
11	as employees; and
12	(E) with respect to classified employees of State-operated therapeutic
13	community residences or inpatient psychiatric hospital units, discharging their
14	duties as employees.
15	* * *
16	Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 3172 is amended to read:
17	§ 3172. EMERGENCY PERSONNEL SURVIVORS BENEFIT REVIEW
18	BOARD
19	* * *
20	(c) If the Board decides to award a monetary benefit, the benefit shall be

paid to the surviving spouse or, if the emergency personnel had no spouse at

1	the time of death, to the surviving child, or equally among surviving children.
2	If the deceased emergency personnel is not survived by a spouse or child, the
3	benefit shall be paid to a surviving parent, or equally between surviving
4	parents. If the deceased emergency personnel is not survived by a spouse,
5	children, or parents, the Board shall not award a monetary benefit under this
6	chapter.
7	(d) Upon a Board decision to award a monetary benefit under this chapter,
8	the Treasurer shall make payment to the beneficiaries as described in
9	subsection (c) of this section. The Treasurer shall have up to one year from the
10	date of receiving the claim to disburse the funds.
11	* * *
12	Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE
13	This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.