

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;

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;

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.