
By: **Senators DeGrange, Britt, Della, Dyson, Garagiola, Hogan, Jimeno,
Kasemeyer, Klausmeier, and Munson**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2006

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Safety Employees Killed in Performance of Duties - Death Benefits**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the amount of the death benefit for certain public safety
4 employees who are killed or die in the performance of duties; and generally
5 relating to death benefits for public safety employees killed in the performance
6 of duties.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
8 Article - Public Safety
9 Section 1-202
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2003 Volume and 2005 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
13 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article - Public Safety**

15 1-202.

16 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

17 (2) (i) "Child" means a natural or adopted, legitimate or illegitimate
18 child or stepchild of the decedent.

19 (ii) "Child" includes a child or stepchild born posthumously.

20 (3) "Correctional officer" has the meaning stated in § 8-201(e)(1) of the
21 Correctional Services Article.

22 (4) (i) "Law enforcement officer" has the meaning stated in § 3-101 of
23 this article.

24 (ii) "Law enforcement officer" includes:

1. an officer who serves in a probationary status; and
2. an officer who serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority of a county or municipal corporation.

(5) "Performance of duties" includes, in the case of a volunteer or career firefighter or rescue squad member:

- (i) actively participating in fighting a fire;
- (ii) going to or from a fire;
- (iii) performing other duties necessary to the operation or maintenance of the fire company;
- (iv) actively participating in the ambulance, advanced life support, or rescue work of an advanced life support unit or a fire, ambulance, or rescue company, including going to or from an emergency or rescue; and
- (v) providing emergency or rescue assistance, whether acting alone or at the direction of or with a fire, ambulance, or rescue company or advanced life support unit.

(6) "Stepchild" means a child of the surviving spouse who was living with or dependent for support on the decedent at the time of the decedent's death.

(b) (1) Subject to subsection (c) of this section and paragraph (2) of this subsection, a death benefit of [\$50,000] \$125,000 shall be paid to the surviving spouse, child, dependent parent, or estate of each of the following individuals who is killed or dies in the performance of duties on or after July 1, 1989:

- (i) a law enforcement officer;
- (ii) a correctional officer;
- (iii) a volunteer or career firefighter or rescue squad member; or
- (iv) a sworn member of the office of State Fire Marshal.

(2) For fiscal year 1999, and for each following fiscal year, the death benefit provided in the prior fiscal year shall be adjusted by any change in the calendar year preceding the fiscal year in the Consumer Price Index (all urban customers - United States city average - all items), as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(3) A death benefit under this subsection is in addition to:

- (i) any workers' compensation benefits;
- (ii) the proceeds of any form of life insurance, regardless of who paid the premiums on the insurance; and

1 (iii) the funeral benefit provided under subsection (d) of this section.

2 (c) (1) Whenever an individual identified in subsection (b)(1)(i) through (iv)
3 of this section dies as the direct and proximate result of a heart attack or stroke, the
4 individual shall be presumed to have died as a direct and proximate result of a
5 personal injury sustained in the performance of duties if:

6 (i) the individual, while on duty:

7 1. engaged in a situation that involved nonroutine stressful
8 or strenuous physical law enforcement, fire suppression, rescue, hazardous material
9 response, emergency medical services, prison security, disaster relief, or other
10 emergency response activity; or

11 2. participated in a training exercise that involved
12 nonroutine stressful or strenuous physical activity;

13 (ii) the individual died as a result of a heart attack or stroke that
14 the individual suffered:

15 1. while engaging or participating in an activity described in
16 item (i)1 or 2 of this paragraph;

17 2. while still on duty after engaging or participating in an
18 activity described in item (i)1 or 2 of this paragraph; or

19 3. not later than 24 hours after engaging or participating in
20 an activity described in item (i)1 or 2 of this paragraph; and

21 (iii) the presumption is not overcome by competent medical evidence
22 to the contrary.

23 (2) For purposes of paragraph (1) of this subsection, nonroutine stressful
24 or strenuous physical activity does not include actions of a clerical, administrative, or
25 nonmanual nature.

26 (d) (1) Reasonable funeral expenses, not exceeding \$10,000, shall be paid to
27 the surviving spouse, child, parent, or estate of each of the following individuals who
28 is killed or dies in the performance of duties:

29 (i) a law enforcement officer;

30 (ii) a correctional officer;

31 (iii) a volunteer or career firefighter or rescue squad member; or

32 (iv) a sworn member of the office of State Fire Marshal.

33 (2) The funeral benefit under this subsection shall be reduced by the
34 amount of any related workers' compensation benefits paid under § 9-689 of the
35 Labor and Employment Article.

1 (e) (1) The Secretary of State shall issue a State flag to the family of a
2 firefighter, policeman, member of the military, or sworn member of the office of State
3 Fire Marshal who is killed in the performance of duty.

4 (2) (i) Except when the deceased is a member of the military, the flag
5 shall be presented to the family of the deceased by the State Senator of the legislative
6 district in which the deceased resided or served.

7 (ii) When the deceased is a member of the military, the flag shall be
8 presented to the family of the deceased by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

9 (f) On a case-by-case basis, the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional
10 Services may award a death benefit under this section if:

11 (1) the decedent's death was caused by the decedent's intentional
12 misconduct;

13 (2) the decedent intended to bring about the decedent's death; or

14 (3) the decedent's voluntary intoxication was the proximate cause of the
15 decedent's death.

16 (g) If the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services determines that
17 the benefits under this section are to be paid, the benefits shall be paid:

18 (1) to the decedent's surviving spouse;

19 (2) if no individual is eligible under item (1) of this subsection, to each
20 surviving child of the decedent in equal shares;

21 (3) (i) for a death benefit under subsection (b) of this section, if no
22 individual is eligible under item (1) or (2) of this subsection, to the decedent's
23 surviving parent, if the parent was a dependent as defined in § 152 of the Internal
24 Revenue Code; or

25 (ii) for any other benefit under this section, if no individual is
26 eligible under item (1) or (2) of this subsection, to the decedent's surviving parent; or

27 (4) if no individual is eligible under item (1), (2), or (3) of this subsection,
28 to the decedent's estate.

29 (h) Payments under this section shall be made out of money that the Governor
30 includes for that purpose in the State budget.

31 (i) A person aggrieved by a final decision of the Secretary of Public Safety and
32 Correctional Services under this section may seek judicial review as provided for
33 review of final decisions in Title 10, Subtitle 2 of the State Government Article.

34 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
35 October 1, 2006.