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Environment and Transportation  
Committee

*Chair*

Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Administrative,  
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Joint Committee on Ending  
Homelessness

Joint Committee on Pensions



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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 922**

State Retirement and Pension System - COVID-19-Related Death Benefits – Clarification  
February 24, 2021  
Appropriations Committee

I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 922 -- legislation put forward by the Joint Committee on Pensions (JCP) -- that would ensure that we, as a State, fulfill our promise to our State Employees who have served on the front lines throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As background and as cited in our December 9th Joint Committee on Pensions decision document, “existing law provides a benefit for a line-of-duty death of a member of one of the several systems. These benefits are found under Title 29, Subtitle 2 of the State Personnel and Pensions Article. Generally, if an employee dies or is killed in the performance of their duty, their surviving family members can receive a benefit of an allowance of two-thirds of the member’s average final compensation and payment of member contributions.”

At that meeting, the Joint Committee voted to recommend legislation to clarify that line-of-duty death benefits are eligible to be received in the event of a COVID death - and this legislation is the fruition of that vote.

To that effect, House Bill 922 will clarify that a system member’s death that was caused or contributed to by COVID-19 can be eligible for a line-of-duty death benefit, provided that:

- reported to the member’s usual work location or to an alternative work location provided by the employer that is not the member’s home;
- contracted COVID-19 within 14 days after reporting to work, subject to specified documentation; and
- the death occurred on or after March 5, 2020 and before July 1, 2022.

The Bill sunsets the benefit on June 30, 2022 and has a number of reporting requirements necessary for the General Assembly to make future decisions on this policy, including:

- Reporting periodically on any benefits awarded;
- Reporting by December 1, 2021 on the number of applications that have been denied and the aggregate summary of the reasons for which an application was denied.

I respectfully request a favorable recommendation on HB 922.