

SENATE, No. 4816

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 15, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator JOHN J. BURZICHELLI
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

SYNOPSIS

Provides same death benefits to SPRS members who die by suicide as those who die in performance of duty.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning death benefits provided under the State Police
2 Retirement System and amending P.L.1965, c.89.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. Section 14 of P.L.1965, c.89 (C.53:5A-14) is amended to read
8 as follows:

9 14. a. Upon the death of a member in active service as a result
10 of:

11 (1) an accident met in the actual performance of duty at some
12 definite time and place, or

13 (2) service in the reserve component of the Armed Forces of the
14 United States or the National Guard in a federal active duty status,
15 and such death was not the result of the member's willful
16 negligence, an accidental death benefit shall be payable if a report
17 of the accident is filed in the office of the Division of State Police
18 within 60 days next following the accident, but the board of trustees
19 may waive such time limit, for a reasonable period, if in the
20 judgment of the board the circumstances warrant such action. No
21 such application shall be valid or acted upon unless it is filed in the
22 office of the retirement system within five years of the date of such
23 death.

24 b. (1) Upon the receipt of proper proofs of the death of a
25 member on account of which an accidental death benefit is payable,
26 there shall be paid to the surviving spouse a pension of 70% of final
27 compensation or of adjusted final compensation, as appropriate, for
28 the use of that spouse and children of the deceased, to continue for
29 as long as the person qualifies as a "surviving spouse" for the
30 purposes of this act. If there is no surviving spouse or in case the
31 spouse dies, 70% of final compensation or of adjusted final
32 compensation, as the case may be, will be payable to the member's
33 surviving child or surviving children in equal shares.

34 If there is no surviving spouse or child, 25% of final
35 compensation will be payable to one surviving parent or 40% of
36 final compensation will be payable to two surviving parents in
37 equal shares.

38 As used in this paragraph, "adjusted final compensation" means
39 the amount of final compensation or final compensation as adjusted,
40 as the case may be, increased by the same percentage increase
41 which is applied in any adjustments of the compensation schedule
42 of active members after the member's death and before the date on
43 which the deceased member of the retirement system would have
44 accrued 25 years of service under an assumption of continuous
45 service, at which time the amount resulting from such increases

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 shall become fixed and shall be the basis for adjustments pursuant
2 to the Pension Adjustment Act, P.L.1958, c.143 (C.43:3B-1 et seq.).
3 Any adjustments to final compensation or adjusted final
4 compensation shall take effect at the same time as any adjustments
5 in the compensation schedule of active members. The provisions of
6 the Pension Adjustment Act shall not apply to any pension based
7 upon adjusted final compensation other than the fixed pension in
8 effect at the conclusion of the 25-year period.

9 (2) In the event of accidental death occurring in the first year of
10 creditable service, the benefits, payable pursuant to this subsection,
11 shall be computed at the annual rate of compensation.

12 c. If there is no surviving spouse, child or parent, there shall be
13 paid to any other beneficiary of the deceased member, his aggregate
14 contributions at the time of death.

15 d. In no case shall the death benefits provided in subsection b.
16 be less than that provided under subsection c.

17 e. In addition to the foregoing benefits payable under
18 subsection a. or b., there shall also be paid in one sum to the
19 member's beneficiary, an amount equal to 3 1/2 times final
20 compensation.

21 f. (Deleted by amendment.)

22 g. (Deleted by amendment.)

23 h. In addition to the foregoing benefits, the State shall pay to
24 the member's employer-sponsored health insurance program all
25 health insurance premiums for the coverage of the member's
26 surviving spouse and surviving children.

27 i. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection a. of this
28 section, or any other law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the
29 death of a member in active service as a result of suicide shall be
30 treated as an accident met in the actual performance of the
31 member's duty at some definite time and place and shall not be
32 considered to be an act of the member's willful negligence.

33 (cf: P.L.2016, c.26, s.2)

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35 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
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38 STATEMENT

39
40 This bill provides the same death benefits to State Police
41 Retirement System (SPRS) members who die by suicide as
42 provided to those who die in the performance of their duty.

43 Under current law, in order to receive SPRS accidental death
44 benefits, it must be shown that the member's death occurred while
45 in active service as a result of an accident met in the actual
46 performance of duty at some definite time and place, or service in
47 the reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States or

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1 the National Guard in a federal active duty status, and such death
2 was not the result of the member's willful negligence.

3 Under this bill, the death of a SPRS member by suicide will be
4 treated as an accident met in the actual performance of the
5 member's duty and will not be considered to be an act of the
6 member's willful negligence.

7 This bill will permit the survivors of the deceased SPRS member
8 the ability to receive the enhanced accidental death benefits, as
9 compared to the ordinary death benefit, under SPRS. As provided
10 under current law, such accidental death benefits will not expire if
11 the surviving spouse remarries.