



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

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DATE: May 1, 2019

TO: Senate Rules Committee
Ginny Burdick, Senate Majority Leader
Herman Baertschiger Jr., Senate Minority Leader
Brian Boquist
Michael Dembrow
Arnie Roblan

FROM: Linsay Hale, Professional Standards Division Director

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 507-7

Background: The Public Safety Memorial Fund (PSMF) was established in 1999 to provide immediate, temporary financial assistance to families of public safety officers¹ who suffer a qualifying death or to officers suffering a qualifying disability in the line of duty.

Current benefits include a mandatory one-time, lump sum payment of \$25,000 and the possible award of up to 12 months of mortgage payments on the residence of the public safety officer, reimbursement for health and dental coverage for all eligible beneficiaries; and undergraduate and graduate level scholarships for all eligible beneficiaries.

Since its inception, the PSMF has assisted the families of more than 50 public safety officers and has awarded nearly \$3 million dollars to eligible beneficiaries. In the current biennium, the PSMF has assisted the families of 6 officers tragically killed in the line of duty, paying out approximately \$85,000. Benefit costs per eligible beneficiary start at no less than \$25,000 with on-going benefit costs potentially exceeding \$250,000, depending on the number and age of eligible dependents.

Effect of SB 507-7 on the PSMF: Currently, an officer qualifies for PSMF consideration if his or her death or permanent, total disability is:

- The direct or proximate result of an enforcement action, emergency response, or a public safety training for an enforcement actions or emergency response that the public safety officer is authorized or obligated to perform by law, rule regulation or condition of employment or service;
- An act committed against the public safety officer because of the public safety officer's position as a public safety officer; or
- Is the result of an injury or occupational disease that is compensable under ORS chapter 656 or a disability program provided by a city having a population of more than 200,000 that provides comparable benefits by ordinance or charter.

¹ For the purposes of PSMF eligibility, "public safety officer" includes corrections officers, career and volunteer fire service professionals, parole and probation officers, police officers, reserve officers, and youth corrections officers.

SB 507 seeks to expand the definition of compensable occupational diseases to presumptively include mental or emotional trauma or stress-related disorders experienced by certain public safety providers.

The 2017-19 legislatively approved budget for the PSMF was \$269,438. The 19-21 Governor's recommended budget for the PSMF is \$274,677. Though it is impossible to predict how many more applications for PSMF benefits would be made with the passage of this legislation, it is reasonable to assume that the number of eligible beneficiaries would increase substantially.

It is presumed that the PSMF as currently funded would be unable to sustain this increased demand.
