

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 226

Short Title: Align Benefits for Firefighters with Cancer. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Johnson, Barnes, and Lazzara (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 4, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO INCLUDE ANY CANCER, THE DIAGNOSIS OF WHICH QUALIFIED A
3 FIREFIGHTER FOR BENEFITS UNDER THE FIREFIGHTERS' CANCER INSURANCE
4 PROGRAM OR THE FIREFIGHTERS' HEALTH BENEFITS PILOT PROGRAM, IN THE
5 LIST OF FIREFIGHTER DEATHS MEETING THE DEFINITION OF KILLED IN THE
6 LINE OF DUTY UNDER THE PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES' DEATH BENEFITS
7 ACT.

8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 143-166.2(6) reads as rewritten:

10 "(6) Killed in the line of duty. – This term shall apply to all of the following deaths:

11 ...

12 e. When the death of a firefighter occurs as a direct and proximate result
13 of any of the following cancers that are occupationally related to
14 firefighting, that firefighter is presumed to have been killed in the line
15 of duty:

- 16 1. Mesothelioma.
- 17 2. Testicular cancer.
- 18 3. Cancer of the small intestine.
- 19 4. Esophageal cancer.
- 20 5. Oral cavity cancer.
- 21 6. Pharynx cancer.
- 22 7. Any cancer diagnosis that qualified the firefighter for benefits
23 under the Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program, established
24 under Article 86A of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, and
25 because of which benefits under that program were received."

26 **SECTION 2.(a)** Article 86A of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes is amended by
27 adding a new section to read:

28 "**§ 58-86A-10. Firefighters' Health Benefits Pilot Program.**

29 Any firefighter having received a benefit under the Firefighters' Health Benefits Pilot
30 Program shall be deemed to have received benefits under the Firefighters' Cancer Insurance
31 Program under this Article."

32 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 58-86A-1 reads as rewritten:

33 "**§ 58-86A-1. Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program established; purpose.**

34 (a) There is hereby established the Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program in the Office
35 of the State Fire Marshal. The purpose of the Program is to provide health benefits as authorized
36 by this Article to eligible firefighters with a new diagnosis of cancer on or after January 1, 2022.



1 The ~~health~~ benefits provided under this Program shall be supplemental to any other health
2 benefits authorized by law for firefighters. The Program is a permanent continuation of the
3 Firefighters' Health Benefits Pilot Program.

4 (b) The Office of the State Fire Marshal shall administer the ~~Program instead of~~
5 ~~purchasing private Program. The State Fire Marshal shall not purchase commercial insurance for~~
6 ~~that purpose, and the Office shall perform this duty by contracting the purpose of the Program~~
7 ~~and instead shall contract~~ with a third-party administrator. The contracting procedure for the
8 third-party administrator is not subject to Article 3C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.

9 (c) The Office of the State Fire Marshal may use up to ten percent (10%) of the funds
10 appropriated in each fiscal biennium for the Program for the reasonable and necessary expenses
11 incurred by the Office in administering the Program."

12 **SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 58-86A-2 reads as rewritten:

13 "**§ 58-86A-2. Definitions.**

14 The following definitions apply in this Article:

15 ...

16 (5) Firefighters' Health Benefits Pilot Program. – The pilot program established
17 under Section 30.4A of S.L. 2021-180.

18 (6) Reserved for future codification purposes.

19 (7) Program. – The Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program under this Article."

20 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
21 State Treasurer the sum of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in recurring funds for each year of
22 the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium to be used for benefits payable under the Public Safety Employees'
23 Death Benefits Act related to the implementation of this act.

24 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective July 1, 2025, and applies to qualifying deaths
25 occurring on or after that date.