

TITLE: "AN ACT CONCERNING HEART DISEASE AND HYPERTENSION BENEFITS FOR MUNICIPAL POLICEMEN AND FIREMEN"

FAVORABLY REPORTED BY Labor and Public Employees

EFFECTIVE DATE: 7/1/92

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT - BILL NUMBER SHB 5067

STATE IMPACT Potential Cost (Workers' Compensation Fund), see explanation below

MUNICIPAL IMPACT Potential Savings, Future Years, see explanation below

STATE AGENCY(S) Workers' Compensation Commission

EXPLANATION OF ESTIMATES:

MUNICIPAL IMPACT: The passage of this bill could result in savings to various municipalities in future years that cannot be determined at this time. The bill limits the conditions under which regular paid municipal police officers and paid uniformed firefighters hired after June 30, 1992 may receive heart and hypertension benefits. Newly hired police officers or firefighters will not be eligible for benefits if (1) they have been members of the department for less than two years or (2) if the municipality for which they work proves by a preponderance of evidence that their heart disease or hypertension is not job-related. Persons hired before July 1, 1992 are not affected and remain eligible for benefits under the current law.

Potential savings from replacing the "irrebuttable presumption" with this "rebuttable presumption" would be realized gradually over future years as the number of police officers and firefighters hired under the new provisions increases. The number of cases where the municipality can "prove by a preponderance of evidence that the member's condition or impairment of health caused by hypertension or heart disease is not job-related" cannot be determined at this time. However, the presumption that the impairment is job-related remains and it is the obligation of the municipality to prove otherwise. Cases would be heard before the Workers' Compensation Commission. Based on a survey by the Office of Legislative Research, the total municipal cost for these benefits in FY 1991-92 is estimated to be \$10 million.

STATE IMPACT: The passage of this bill could result in additional costs to the Workers' Compensation Commission (Workers' Compensation Fund) that cannot be determined at this time. The bill would allow municipalities to prove by a preponderance of evidence that heart disease and hypertension are not job-related (rebuttable presumption). These cases would be heard by the Workers' Compensation Commission. The number of cases and resulting costs are indeterminate.