

984487657

## SENATE BILL NO. 172

Offered January 14, 1998

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.1-20.1:05, relating to the purchase of continued health insurance coverage by surviving spouses and dependents of certain local public safety employees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patron—Forbes

\_\_\_\_\_  
Referred to the Committee on Local Government

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.1-20.1:05 as follows:**

§ 2.1-20.1:05. Purchase of continued health insurance coverage by the surviving spouse and any dependents of an active or retired local law-enforcement officer, firefighter, etc.

A. For the purposes of this section, "plan sponsor" means a local government employer which has established a plan of health insurance coverage for its employees, retirees and dependents of employees as are described in subsection B.

B. The surviving spouse and any dependents of an active or retired law-enforcement officer of any county, city, or town of this Commonwealth; a jail officer; a regional jail or jail farm superintendent; a sheriff, deputy sheriff, or city sergeant or deputy city sergeant of the City of Richmond; a member of any fire company or department or rescue squad which has been recognized by an ordinance or a resolution of the governing body of any county, city, or town of this Commonwealth as an integral part of the official safety program of such county, city or town; or a member of an emergency medical services department, whose death occurs as the direct or proximate result of the performance of his duty, including the presumptions under §§ 27-40.1, 27-40.2, 51.1-813, and 65.2-402, shall be entitled, upon proper application to the appropriate plan sponsor, to purchase continued health insurance coverage on the following conditions: (i) on the date of death, the deceased participated in a health insurance plan administered by the plan sponsor and (ii) on the date of the deceased's death, the applicants were included in the health insurance plan in condition (i) of this subsection. The health insurance plan administered by the plan sponsor shall provide means whereby coverage for the spouse and any dependents of the deceased as provided in this section may be purchased.

C. Any application to purchase continued health insurance coverage hereunder shall be made in writing to the plan sponsor within sixty days of the date of the deceased's death. The time for making application may be extended by the plan sponsor for good cause shown.

D. In addition to any necessary information requested by the plan sponsor, the application shall state whether conditions (i) and (ii) set forth in subsection B of this section have been met. If the plan sponsor states that such conditions have not been met, the plan sponsor shall conduct an informal fact-finding conference or consultation with the applicant pursuant to § 9-6.14:11 of the Administrative Process Act. Upon scheduling the conference or consultation, the provisions of the local government's grievance procedure for nonprobationary, permanent employees shall apply thereafter.

E. Upon payment of any required premiums, coverage shall automatically be extended during the period for making application and shall be effective retroactive to the date of the deceased's death.

F. The terms, conditions, and costs of continued health insurance coverage purchased hereunder shall be subject to administration by the plan sponsor. The plan sponsor may increase the cost of coverage consistent with its administration of health insurance plans under § 2.1-20.1:02. However, at no time shall the surviving spouse or dependents pay more for continued health insurance coverage than active employees pay under the same plan for the same class of coverage.

G. For the surviving spouse, continued health insurance coverage purchased hereunder shall automatically terminate upon occurrence of any of the following: (i) death, (ii) remarriage, (iii) alternate health insurance coverage being obtained, or (iv) any applicable condition outlined in the policies and procedures of the plan sponsor governing health insurance plans administered for its active employees.

H. For any surviving dependents, continued health insurance coverage purchased hereunder shall automatically terminate upon occurrence of any of the following: (i) death; (ii) marriage; (iii) alternate health insurance coverage being obtained; (iv) attaining the age of twenty-one, unless the dependent is (a) a full-time college student, in which event coverage shall not terminate until such dependent has either attained the age of twenty-five or until such time as the dependent ceases to be a full-time college student, whichever occurs first, or (b) under a mental or physical disability, in which event coverage shall not terminate until three months following cessation of the disability; or (v) any applicable

INTRODUCED

SB172

60 *condition outlined in the policies and procedures of the plan sponsor governing health insurance plans*  
61 *administered for its active employees.*  
62 **2. That the provisions of this act shall apply to spouses and dependents of employees covered**  
63 **under this act who died on or after January 1, 1994.**