

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 1073

PRINTER NO. 1656

AMOUNT

\$823,706

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

March 23, 2018

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Vulakovich

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 1073 amends the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law, known as the Heart & Lung Act, by extending benefits to the following law enforcement officers and investigators:

- Campus police officers employed by a State-owned university, State-aided university, community college or State-related college or university;
- Rangers, ranger supervisors, ranger operations specialists and ranger trainees employed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources;
- Members of the Fort Indiantown Gap Police;
- Special investigators of the Office of Inspector General;
- Members of the Allegheny County Port Authority Police; and,
- Members of the Allegheny County Housing Authority Police.

The bill requires benefit payments to be made from appropriations made to the law enforcement officers and investigators' employers.

Currently, the law provides enforcement officers and investigators covered by the Heart and Lung Act with temporary benefits including full salary, medical and hospital expenses if they are injured or contract certain diseases while performing official duties until the disability has ceased. After four consecutive years of employment, enforcement officers and investigators are eligible for compensation for diseases of the heart and of the respiratory system. Any workmen's compensation received or collected by the employee eligible for Heart and Lung Act benefits is to be turned over by the employee to the employer. In addition, the law provides that no absence during an injury covered under the law shall reduce the usual sick leave benefits of enforcement officers or investigators.

The legislation is scheduled to take effect in 60 days.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

At present, when the enforcement officers and investigators subject to the legislation are injured while performing their duties, they are entitled to workmen’s compensation, which pays two-thirds of the employee’s average weekly wage. The legislation entitles them to receive the difference between the amount paid by workmen’s compensation and the employee’s salary.

Based on 2017 data, costs for Heart and Lung Benefits for enforcement officers and investigators under the Commonwealth’s jurisdiction totaled \$15,750,240, or \$778 per eligible employee based on an estimated complement of 20,250 enforcement officers and investigators. Assuming a similar per employee cost experience and an estimate of 1,059 of employees that would be extended benefits, the annual cost of Senate Bill 1073 is estimated to be \$823,706.

Employers	Est. Cost
Higher Education	\$642,475
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	\$108,894
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	\$ 7,778
Office of Inspector General	\$ 23,334
Allegheny County Port Authority	\$ 35,002
Allegheny County Housing Authority	\$ 6,223
Total	\$823,706

The employers will likely incur additional administrative expenses related to Heart and Lung Act appeals that can be accomplished within their existing operating budgets.