

**Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Committee**  
February 20th, 2025

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**Bill: 1st substitute SB 255 – Line-of-Duty Death Benefit Amendments**

Sponsor: Senator Dennis R. Owens

Floor Sponsor: Representative Douglas R. Welton

**UASD Position: Tracking**

This Bill modifies provisions relating to benefits resulting from a line-of-duty death.

Discussion: This Bill expands benefits for the spouse and surviving children of a public safety or fire service employee who dies in the line of duty by adding dental and vision coverage. It also eliminates the 12-month waiting period to access funds from the Local Public Safety and Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust Fund (“Fund”), allowing immediate access to these funds for the surviving spouse's and children's benefits. Senator Owens addressed the first substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. He explained that the original Bill mistakenly stated that the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) was responsible for reimbursing 12 months of insurance costs for law enforcement agencies providing these benefits. The language was corrected to clarify that the refund would instead come from the Fund. The sponsor emphasized that this change ensures continued benefits for families of fallen officers and removes the 12-month waiting period, transferring this responsibility to the state. Santaquin City’s Chief Hurst praised the Bill for its positive impact on the benefits available to the surviving family members of fallen officers.

Senator Vickers asked whether the Bill would apply retroactively or only going forward. Chief Hurst expressed a preference for the dental and vision benefits to be retroactive. The sponsor responded that, while they were open to considering this, the potential fiscal impact would need to be assessed. The Utah Chiefs of Police Association and insurance broker Nicole Kuhni spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

**Outcome: 1st substitute SB 255 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**