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Catastrophic Injury Bill

Proposal: Create a new section within Idaho Code (Chapter 59, Section 1352B) to provide benefits to Public Safety Members who sustain a “Catastrophic Injury” while protecting Idaho communities.

Drafted By: Idaho Chiefs of Police Association, partnered with the Idaho Sheriff’s Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Professional Fire Fighters of Idaho to draft this proposed legislation.

Intent: Provide ongoing financial support for first responders who were catastrophically injured in the line of duty. First Responders taking care of First Responders.

- These qualifying first responders unselfishly risked their lives and personal safety in order to serve the citizens of Idaho. As a result, they sustained catastrophic injuries which negatively impacted their ability to financially provide for themselves and their families.

“Catastrophic Injury” - a sudden, violent, life-threatening, duty-related injury sustained by an active member acting within the scope of their public safety officer’s duties and within department policy that is due to an externally caused event or events that is not self-inflicted or the result of intoxication. The injury must be of such severity that it causes the loss of ability to maintain certifications required by the state of Idaho, the member’s department, or both. The injury shall be supported by evidence of one of the following conditions.

- Permanent loss of sight in both eyes.
- Permanent loss of hearing in both ears.
- Total, complete, and permanent loss of ability to speak.
- Loss of foot or feet above the ankle
- Loss of hand or hands above the wrist
- Permanent paralysis to legs or arms
- Traumatic Brain injury (excluding Psychological disorder i.e., PTSD)

Cost: These Injury Benefits would be funded solely by Police and Fire Public Safety members in perpetuity and not by employers.

- PERSI has completed a fiscal impact study and determined that the cost to be an additional .32%, paid into and managed by PERSI.
- Paid By: All rule of 80 PERSI Members identified under the Police Officer and Fire Fighters definition

Benefits:

- Onetime Payment: \$500,000
- Annual Benefit: \$75,000
- Benefits Payable will be Idaho State Tax Free
- Spousal Annuity: The annual benefit would be transferable to the spouse upon the members death (only if married at the time of injury and at the time of death).
- Gainful Employment: Members qualifying for this benefit will likely be unable to hold gainful employment, however, will be permitted to work outside of their profession as a first responder in attempt to promote mental stability and internal purpose.

Conclusion: This is our opportunity to take care of those who lost their ability to take care of themselves while serving fellow Idahoans.