

POLITICS

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Bill would extend insurance for families of fallen police, firefighters

BY JOEY BUNCH
ColoradoPolitics.com

With eight working days left in the General Assembly, the Colorado House will have to move fast to give families of fallen local officers and firefighters the same security of insurance extended to state troopers this session.

Senate Bill 247 passed the upper chamber 35-0 last Thursday and awaits a yet-unscheduled committee

hearing in the House. The legislation was introduced into the four-month session April 16.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Bob Gardner, R-Colorado Springs, would create a state-wide fund for local police and fire districts to pay into to extend health and dental insurance coverage for families affected by work-related deaths for up to a year.

The bill has bipartisan

sponsorship in the House. Reps. Lois Landgraf, R-Fountain, and Tracy Kraft-Tharp, D-Wheat Ridge.

The legislation is a companion, somewhat, to Senate Bill 148, which extended coverage to state employees who ill on the job.

The bill was signed into law last month by Gov. John Hickenlooper after passing the House 63-1 and the Senate 35-0. State Rep. Justin

Everett, R-Littleton, a candidate for state treasurer, was the only lawmaker to vote against it.

That bill was sponsored by Sens. Beth Martinez-Humenik, R-Thornton, and Dominick Moreno, D-Commerce City, with Reps. Tony Exum, D-Colorado Springs, and Polly Lawrence, R-Roxborough Park.

Lawrence also is a candidate for state treasurer.

"Our officers and firefighters are heroes," Gardner said in a statement. "When they fall, their families become our families, and as such, it's our responsibility to ensure that they are taken care of when it's time to pick up the pieces. Senate Bill 247 allows our cities and localities to pool their resources to ensure that the families of our heroes are taken care of during their darkest time."

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