

Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Fred Dyson

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Dyson Bill Benefits State Worker Survivors **HB 480 Promises Benefits if Killers Target Public Employees**

(JUNEAU) – The House today passed House Bill 480, guaranteeing that state pension system survivor benefits will go to the dependents of state employees who are killed because they work for the government, even if they are off-duty at the time.

Sponsored by Rep. Fred Dyson (R-Eagle River), House Bill 480 ensures that the same benefits that accrue to the families of state employees killed on the job extend to those killed off the job site, but on account of their duties.

“By the very nature of their work, some state employees are at varying levels of risk of assault because of the very nature of their work,” Dyson said. “Family caseworkers, investigators, building inspectors and even teachers have responsibilities that cause some citizens to have misdirected anger and resentment.”

State law allows the survivors of state workers who die in the performance of their jobs full survivor benefits under the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and Teacher Retirement System (TRS), as long as the employees die while on the job, fulfilling their work duties.

However, the family of an employee that is killed off their job site, but because of his work, would only be eligible to receive lesser non-occupational death benefits, Dyson said. HB 480 corrects this oversight by providing occupational death benefits for the families of these state employees.

“I would hope that this bill gets passed, but that it never needs to be utilized,” Dyson said. “In the sad event that someone with a grudge against the government takes the life of an off-duty government worker, though, it’s important that we extend the same protection to that person’s family that we do to the survivors of those killed on the job.”

[HB 480](#) moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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