

State of Kansas

Senate Chamber

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Mr. President/Chair 7Mar2012

Thank-you for hearing my testimony today. SB 250 enacts a law to provide for the continuation of health insurance coverage for the surviving spouse and dependent children of a firefighter who dies in the line of duty. The payment of premiums for COBRA continuation of coverage would be paid for a period not to exceed 18 months only if the deceased firefighter was enrolled in a health benefit plan for which the municipality was paying the premiums. It does not apply if no family health plan was in place.

The plan would cover a dependent child until age 18 or until age 24 if a full-time student in a post secondary school

SB 250 coverage would expire:

- ✓ at the end of the 18th calendar month
- ✓ upon remarriage of the surviving spouse.
- ✓ until the surviving spouse reaches age 65

Mr. Chairman, SB 250 is essentially a bill that takes care of those that take care of us by putting their lives on the line to save us and our families. I have had the privilege of opening up several training workshops for volunteer firefighters in Rural Kansas and even they (who receive no personal benefit from this bill) have acknowledged this bill as a huge morale boost recognizing the support to take care of the families of firefighters lost in the line of duty.

I respectfully ask you to support this bill as a small but very powerful action in telling our firefighters and their families that we will never forget their service and will respond to their sacrifice with equal loyalty to their families.

Note on COBRA

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) is a federally protected law that was created to provide covered employees and their immediate families with temporary continued access to employer sponsored group health insurance benefits when such access will otherwise be terminated. For many, COBRA is a viable option when they are put in this situation.