

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE
2025-2026 (194th) BILL SUMMARY

Bill Number: H.2801
Title: *An Act relative to health insurance for surviving spouses*
Sponsor(s): Rep. Marjorie C. Decker (*Cambridge*)
Hearing Date: June 4, 2025
Reporting Deadline: August 3, 2025

Prior History:

2023-24 (H.2495): Reported favorably; Referred to Health Care Financing; Ordered to a House Study

2021-22 (H.2615): Reported favorably; Referred to Health Care Financing; Ordered to a House Study

2019-20 (H.2222): Reported favorably, Referred to Health Care Financing;

2017-18 (H.1366): Reported favorably; Accompanied S.1449; Referred to Health Care Financing; Ordered to a Senate Study

2015-16 (H.2203): Reported favorably; Referred to Health Care Financing; Ordered to a House Study

2013-14 (H.2221): Ordered to a House Study

CURRENT LAW:

M.G.L. c. 32A § 11 – Death of employee or retired employee; continuation of insurance by spouse or dependent: If an active or retired employee insured under this chapter dies, the surviving spouse or surviving dependent if there is no surviving spouse or they subsequently die, may continue the group general or blanket insurance until the remarriage of the surviving spouse or until the surviving dependent becomes eligible for other coverage. The surviving spouse must file an application for the insurance with the proper appointing authority and a method of paying the premiums will be determined. The Commonwealth will pay the same percent of share of the total monthly premium as it does on behalf of retired employees

M.G.L. c. 32B § 9B – Death of employee or retired employee; continuation of insurance coverage by spouse: If an active or retired employee insured under this chapter dies, the surviving spouse or surviving dependent if there is no surviving spouse or they subsequently die, may continue the group general or blanket insurance until the remarriage of the surviving spouse or until the surviving dependent becomes eligible for other coverage. The surviving spouse must file an application for the insurance with the proper appointing authority and a method of paying the premiums will be determined. The surviving spouse will pay the entire cost of the premiums without contribution from the governmental unit

M.G.L. c. 32B § 9D – Insurance premium payable to surviving spouse; contribution by political subdivisions: A county, except Worcester, a city with certain charters, or any other city or district, regional school district, veterans’ services district, a welfare district, or other district may decide to pay one half of the premium paid by the surviving spouse of an insured or retired employee for health insurance as provided for in section 9B. A town will provide the payment either by vote of the town or ballot question. Payment of the entire premium by the surviving spouse as required in 9B will not apply in any governmental unit that accepts this section.

SUMMARY:

The bill amends section 11 of chapter 32A by striking out the words “until the remarriage of said surviving spouse”.

The bill amends 9B of chapter 32B by striking out the requirement that the insurance coverage cease once the surviving spouse remarries. The section is additionally amended by striking out current language and inserting language that states the governmental unit will pay half of the premium cost.

The bill repeals section 9D of chapter 32B.

The changes the bill makes to the marriage requirements section 11 of 32A and section 9B of 32B will apply prospectively to surviving spouses who remarried prior to the effective date of this bill and had their insurance coverage terminated under chapters 32A and 32B. That language change along with the change in governmental units contributing to the premiums will apply retroactively.