

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

Bill Number: H.2877
Title: *An Act relative to disability pensions for violent crimes*
Sponsor(s): Rep. Patrick Joseph Kearney (*Scituate*)
Hearing Date: June 2, 2025
Reporting Deadline: August 1, 2025

Prior History:

2023-24 (H.2567): Ordered to a House Study

2021-22 (H.2697): Reported favorably; Accompanied S.1722; Referred to SWM

CURRENT LAW:

M.G.L. c. 32 § 1 – Definitions: Specifically, “violent act injury” is defined as a catastrophic, life-threatening or life altering and permanent bodily injury sustained as a direct and proximate result of a violent attack upon a person by means of a dangerous weapon, which is designed for the purpose of causing serious injury or death, including but not limited to, a firearm, knife, automobile, or explosive device.

Section 7 of chapter 32 outlines the requirements for accidental disability retirement, how the benefits are calculated, and what benefits the member’s beneficiaries will receive upon their death. Accidental disability due to a violent act injury is also in this section. If the member is receiving accidental disability due to a violent act injury, they receive a pension equal to the regular rate of compensation they were earning at the time they sustained their injury and once they reach the mandatory retirement age, the amount pension is 80 percent of what they were receiving before reaching that age. The surviving spouse, if there is one, receives a pension equal to 75 percent of the pension the member was earning at the time of their death. Any surviving children if there is no surviving spouse will receive a pension split equally amongst them that equals 75 percent of the member’s pension at the time of their death until they turn 18, 22 if they are enrolled as a full-time student, or beyond age 18 if they are mentally or physically incapacitated from earning. The member will also be indemnified from all medical costs associated with the injury and be subject to an outside income earnings limit of half of their pension amount.

Any firefighter, any call, volunteer, auxiliary, intermittent or reserve firefighter, any call, volunteer, auxiliary, intermittent or reserve emergency medical services provider who is a member of a police or fire department and who is not subject to chapter 152, any police officer, any auxiliary, intermittent, special, part-time or reserve police officer or any municipal or public emergency medical technician following any incident involving exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence as set forth in the most recent version of the Diagnostic

and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or any other incident reasonably warranting a critical incident stress management debriefing will receive notice of critical incident stress management debriefing programs.

Please note that the majority of this bill's language reflects the current law as most recently changed by Ch. 149 of the Acts of 2024

SUMMARY:

The bill amends section 7 of chapter 32 by amending subdivision (7) to require attendance to critical incident stress management debriefing. At the request of the emergency service provider or at the request of any member, the member will seek a behavioral health consultation on their own time. Anything discussed during the consultation will be kept confidential.