



# Retired Public Employees Association

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## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

A.7928, by Assemblyman Ortiz

**AN ACT** to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to increasing the survivor's benefit of a retired state employee

The **Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA)** supports this bill which would amend subdivision 2 of Section 657 of the Retirement and Social Security Law, to increase the lump sum benefit paid to survivors of deceased retired State employees by \$500.

For eligible State employees who retired prior to April 1, 1970, the benefit will increase from \$2,000 to \$2,500 and for eligible State employees who retired after April 1, 1970, the benefit will increase from \$3,000 to \$3,500.

The purpose of the Survivor's Benefit Program is to provide a financial protection plan that guarantees a minimum death benefit to the survivors of qualified New York State employees, similar to the federal Social Security Death Benefit. Usually, these funds are used toward burial expenses at a time of financial stress for the family members of deceased State retirees.

The program provides a benefit to State employees, regardless of any membership in a retirement plan. Although it is administered by the State Comptroller's Office, the Survivor's Benefit is an exclusive New York State program that provides benefits that are separate and distinct from the retirement benefits provided under other articles of the Retirement and Social Security Law.

Despite decades of inflation, ***the benefit has remained unchanged since April 1, 1970*** and this slight increase is long overdue.

For these reasons, **RPEA** strongly urges passage of this bill.