

Introduced by

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 65-05-09, 65-05.2-01, and 65-05.2-02 of the
2 North Dakota Century Code, relating to cost-of-living adjustments for workers' compensation
3 total disability benefits.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 65-05-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **65-05-09. Temporary total or permanent total disability - Weekly and aggregate**
8 **benefit.** If an injury causes temporary total or permanent total disability, the fund shall pay to
9 the disabled employee during that disability a weekly benefit equal to sixty-six and two-thirds
10 percent of the gross weekly wage of the employee, subject to a minimum of sixty percent and a
11 maximum of one hundred ten percent of the average weekly wage in the state. If an employee
12 is disabled due to an injury, that employee's benefits will be based upon the employee's wage
13 and the organization benefit rates in effect on the date of first disability.

14 1. If an employee suffers disability but is able to return to employment for a period of
15 ~~twelve~~ three consecutive calendar months or more, that employee's benefits will be
16 based upon the wage in effect at the time of the recurrence of the disability or upon
17 the wage that employee received prior to the injury, whichever is higher. The
18 organization benefit rates are those in effect at the time of that recurrence.

19 2. The disability benefit or the combined disability benefit and dependency award may
20 not exceed the weekly wage of the employee after deductions for social security
21 and federal income tax.

22 3. When an employee is permanently and totally disabled, must be maintained in a
23 nursing home or similar facility, and has no dependent parent, spouse, or children,

1 as much of that employee's weekly benefit as is necessary may be used by the
2 organization to help defray the cost of the nursing home care.

3 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 65-05.2-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is
4 amended and reenacted as follows:

5 **65-05.2-01. Eligibility for supplementary benefits.**

- 6 1. For claims filed before January 1, 2006, a workforce safety and insurance claimant
7 who is receiving temporary total disability benefits, permanent total disability
8 benefits, or death benefits, and who has been receiving disability or death benefits
9 for a period of ~~seven~~ three consecutive years is eligible for supplementary benefits.
10 Eligibility for supplementary benefits under this subsection lasts as long as the
11 claimant is entitled to temporary total disability benefits, permanent total disability
12 benefits, or death benefits.
- 13 2. For claims filed after December 31, 2005, a workforce safety and insurance
14 claimant who is receiving permanent total disability benefits or death benefits and
15 who has been receiving disability or death benefits for a period of at least three
16 consecutive years is eligible for supplementary benefits. Eligibility for
17 supplementary benefits under this subsection lasts as long as the claimant is
18 entitled to permanent total disability benefits or death benefits.

19 **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 65-05.2-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is
20 amended and reenacted as follows:

21 **65-05.2-02. Supplementary benefits - Amount.**

- 22 1. A claimant whose weekly benefit rate is less than sixty percent of the state's
23 average weekly wage, who is eligible for supplementary benefits and who is
24 receiving temporary total disability benefits, permanent total disability benefits, or
25 death benefits regardless of the date of death, is entitled to receive a weekly
26 supplementary benefit that, when added to the weekly temporary total disability
27 benefit, permanent total disability benefit, or death benefit, equals the ratio of that
28 claimant's weekly benefit to the state's average weekly wage on the date of the
29 claimant's first disability, times the state's average weekly wage in effect at the
30 date eligibility for supplementary benefits is achieved. The organization shall
31 determine on an annual basis, for a claimant who receives a supplementary benefit

1 under this subsection, supplementary benefit increases equal to a percentage of
2 that claimant's combined weekly benefit. That percentage is equal to the annual
3 percentage change in the state's average weekly wage. For purposes of this
4 section, combined weekly benefit means the weekly benefit for which the claimant
5 is eligible before any applicable social security offset plus the amount of weekly
6 supplementary benefits for which the claimant is eligible.

7 2. A claimant whose weekly benefit rate is greater than or equal to sixty percent of the
8 state's average weekly wage, who is eligible for supplementary benefits and who is
9 receiving temporary total disability benefits, permanent total disability benefits, or
10 death benefits regardless of the date of death, is entitled to receive a weekly
11 supplementary benefit equal to a percentage of that claimant's weekly benefit.
12 That percentage is equal to the annual percentage change in the state's average
13 weekly wage. The organization shall determine on an annual basis, for that
14 claimant, supplementary benefit increases equal to a percentage of that claimant's
15 combined weekly benefit. That percentage is equal to the annual percentage
16 change in the state's average weekly wage.

17 3. An annual recalculation of supplementary benefits may not result in a rate less
18 than the previous rate. If a claim has been accepted on an aggravation basis
19 under section 65-05-15 and the claimant is eligible for supplementary benefits, the
20 claimant's supplementary benefit must be proportionally calculated.