FIRST ENGROSSMENT

Fifty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1248

Introduced by

Representatives Keiser, Price

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 50-24.1-02.8 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to transfers involving annuities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 50-24.1-02.8 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

50-24.1-02.8. Transfers involving annuities.

1. For purposes of this section, "annuity" means a policy, certificate, contract, or other arrangement between two or more parties whereby one party pays money or other valuable consideration to the other party in return for the right to receive payments in the future. ~~The~~ Except for purposes of subsections 3 and 5, the term does not mean an employee benefit that qualifies for favorable tax treatment under the Internal Revenue Code or a plan described in the Internal Revenue Code as a retirement plan under which contributions must end and withdrawals begin by age seventy and one-half.
2. The purchase of an annuity, an instrument purporting to be an annuity, or any other arrangement that meets the definition of annuity in subsection 1 is considered an uncompensated assignment or transfer of assets under section 50-24.1-02, resulting in a penalty under the applicable rules established by the department of human services unless the following criteria are met:
   a. The annuity is irrevocable and cannot be assigned to another person.
   b. The annuity is purchased from an insurance company or other commercial company that sells annuities as part of the normal course of business.
   c. The annuity provides substantially equal monthly payments of principal and interest and does not have a balloon or deferred payment of principal or

interest. Payments will be considered substantially equal if the total annual payment in any year varies by five percent or less from the payment in the previous year.

d. The annuity will return the full principal and interest within the purchaser's life expectancy as determined by the department of human services.

e. The monthly payments from the annuity, unless specifically ordered otherwise by a court of competent jurisdiction, do not exceed the maximum monthly income amount allowed for a community spouse as determined by the department pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1396r-5.

3. Unless done in compliance with subsection 4, a provision in an annuity that purports to preclude assignment or transfer of any interest in the annuity is void as against public policy upon application of the purchaser, the purchaser's spouse, the annuitant, or the annuitant's spouse for benefits under this chapter. This subsection applies only to an annuity for which a payment option has been irrevocably selected after July 31, 2005.

4. An annuity, an instrument purporting to be an annuity, or any other arrangement that meets the definition of annuity in subsection 1, purchased after July 31, 2005, is not an available asset and the expenditure of funds to purchase such an annuity, instrument, or other arrangement may not be considered to be a disqualifying transfer of an asset for purposes of this chapter if:

a. The annuity is purchased from an insurance company or other commercial company that sells annuities as part of the normal course of business;

b. The annuity is irrevocable and neither the annuity nor payments due under the annuity may be assigned or transferred;

c. The monthly payments from all annuities owned by the purchaser that comply with this subsection may not exceed the minimum monthly maintenance needs allowance for a community spouse as determined by the department pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1396r-5 and, when combined with the purchaser's other monthly income, at the time of application of the purchaser, the purchaser's spouse, the annuitant, or the annuitant's spouse, for benefits under this chapter, do not exceed one hundred fifty percent of the minimum monthly maintenance needs allowance allowed for a community spouse as determined by the department pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1396r-5;

d. The annuity provides substantially equal monthly payments of principal and interest and does not have a balloon or deferred payment of principal or interest. Payments will be considered substantially equal if the total annual payment in any year varies by five percent or less from the payment in the previous year;

e. The annuity will return the full principal and interest and has a guaranteed period that is equal to the purchaser's life expectancy as determined by the life expectancy tables used by the department of human services; and

f. The annuity does not include any provision that limits the effect of subsection 5.

5. Except as provided in subsection 2, before benefits under this chapter may be provided to an otherwise eligible applicant who is fifty-five years of age or older, the department of human services, or the successor of that department, must be irrevocably named on each annuity owned by that applicant, or by the spouse of that applicant, that complies with subsection 4, as primary beneficiary for payment of amounts due following the death of the applicant and the applicant's spouse, if any, not to exceed the amount of benefits paid under this chapter on behalf of that applicant after age fifty-five, plus interest on that amount at the legal rate from six months after the applicant's death. If the department receives notice within ninety days of the death of the applicant or the applicant's spouse that reliably demonstrates that the applicant is survived by a minor child or permanently and totally disabled child, the department shall remit any payments made to the department under this section to those survivors in equal shares. When the obligations to the minor child or children or permanently and totally disabled child or children and the department are fulfilled, the department shall remit any future payments made to the department under this section to the contingent beneficiaries selected by the annuitant regarding each annuity owned by the applicant or by the spouse of the applicant which complies with subsection 4.