

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1453

As Passed House:

March 10, 1995

Title: An act relating to reserve officers' retirement.

Brief Description: Providing for reserve officers' retirement.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Foreman, Ogden, Chappell, Costa, Dickerson, Schoesler, Stevens and Radcliff).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/28/95, 3/1/95 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/10/95, 97-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Silver, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Huff, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Brumsickle; Chappell; Cooke; Crouse; G. Fisher; Foreman; Hargrove; Hickel; Jacobsen; Lambert; Lisk; McMorris; Poulsen; Reams; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott; Thibaudeau and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Carlson.

Staff: Dan Chang (786-7191).

Background: Local governments have the option of joining the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension Fund. The fund provides two kinds of benefits to volunteer fire fighters: 1) relief benefits providing medical and survivor needs, and 2) a pension system providing for retirement.

The base retirement benefit is calculated upon retirement for each member equalling \$25 per month plus \$8 for each year contributions were made not to exceed \$225 per month. A percentage factor based on years of service is then applied to the base in order to arrive at the monthly benefit.

The fund is administered by the State Board of Volunteer Fire Fighters who sets annual contribution rates. Cost per member of the pension fund is \$109. Members contribute \$30 per year, the municipality contributes an additional \$30 per year, and the remaining cost is paid from the fire insurance premium tax.

Currently, no such provisions exist for reserve law officers. There are 2,349 (23 percent) reserve law officers working in 172 cities in 38 counties of the state of Washington compared to 7,876 (77 percent) regular officers.

Summary of Bill: Local governments and their reserve officers are allowed to join the pension benefits portion of the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension Fund. The Board of Volunteer Fire Fighters will set fees for participation that result in no change in current contribution rates and no change in the current funding system.

Prior service credit can be purchased, however, reserve officers are excluded from the relief system and retirement benefit will not be granted unless the reserve officer completes at least three years of service after the effective date of this act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Reserve officers work under the same conditions, facing the same danger as regular officers but work as volunteers. Reserve officers also do not receive retirement benefits for the work they do. HB 1453 would provide reserve officers with a pension benefit and may provide an extra incentive to continue their work to protect communities.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Charles Muncee, Wenatchee Police Reserve Unit; Larry Slavens, Sunnyside Police Department; Terry Lattin, Seattle Police Department; Doug Bider, Spokane County Sheriff's Office; Larry Erickson, WASPC; Stephen Zetz, Sunnyside Police Department; Denny Henderson, Sunnyside Police Department; M. Zimmerman, Chelan County Sheriff; Bob King, Chelan County Sheriff; and Caroline Libbey; Chelan County Sheriff.