
Appropriations Committee

SSB 6340

Brief Description: Providing a benefit increase to certain retirees of the public employees' retirement system plan 1 and the teachers' retirement system plan 1.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Conway, Bailey, Hobbs, Walsh, Hasegawa, Hunt, Mullet, Keiser, Palumbo and Saldaña; by request of Select Committee on Pension Policy).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides a one-time increase to the Public Employees' Retirement System and Teachers' Retirement System Plans 1 member monthly benefits of 2 percent up to a maximum of \$62.50.

Hearing Date: 2/24/18

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

The basic retirement allowance of a member of Plan 1 of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS Plan 1) or the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS Plan 1) is equal to 2 percent of the member's average final compensation, calculated on the members' highest consecutive two years of compensation, for each year of service. Retirement benefits in the Plans 1 are available to members after 30 years of service at any age, with 25 years of service at age 55, and with five years of service at age 60. The original Plan 1 design did not contain a benefit feature annually adjusting retirees' benefits, though several ad-hoc retiree benefit adjustments were created by the Legislature prior to 1995.

Between 1995 and 2011, PERS Plan 1 and TRS Plan 1 retirees' benefits could be eligible for an annual increase from a benefit generally referred to as the Uniform Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), or Uniform COLA. The Uniform COLA was enacted in 1995 to replace a number of prior COLAs, and was a fixed dollar amount multiplied by the member's total years of service.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The dollar amount of the Uniform COLA was about \$1.88 per year, meaning that a member with 25 years of service would receive an additional \$47 per month each year, and the Uniform COLA itself would have increased by 3 percent per year on July 1. Members did not have a contractual right to future increases to the Uniform COLA, and those increases ceased with the repeal of the Uniform COLA in 2011.

Summary of Bill:

A one-time increase is provided to retirees of the Public Employees' Retirement System Plan 1 and Teachers' Retirement System Plan 1 member monthly benefits of 2 percent, up to a maximum of \$62.50, on July 1, 2018.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2018.