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HOUSE BILL 1912

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State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Blake, Griffey, Kretz, Appleton, Lovick, Santos,  
and Morris

Read first time 02/06/19. Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

1 AN ACT Relating to pension benefits and contributions in the  
2 volunteer firefighters' and reserve officers' relief and pension  
3 system; amending RCW 41.24.030 and 41.24.170; providing an effective  
4 date; and declaring an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 41.24.030 and 2005 c 37 s 2 are each amended to read  
7 as follows:

8 (1) The volunteer firefighters' and reserve officers' relief and  
9 pension principal fund is created in the state treasury as a trust  
10 fund for the benefit of the participants covered by this chapter  
11 consisting of:

12 (a) All bequests, fees, gifts, emoluments, or donations given or  
13 paid to the fund.

14 (b) An annual fee for each member of its fire department to be  
15 paid by each municipal corporation for the purpose of affording  
16 relief provided in this chapter for firefighters as follows:

17 (i) (~~Thirty~~) Fifty dollars for each volunteer or part-paid  
18 member of its fire department;

19 (ii) A sum equal to one and one-half of one percent of the annual  
20 salary attached to the rank of each full-paid member of its fire

1 department, prorated for 1970 on the basis of services prior to March  
2 1, 1970.

3 (c) An annual fee for each emergency worker of an emergency  
4 medical service district paid by the district that is sufficient to  
5 pay the full costs of covering the emergency worker under the relief  
6 provisions of this chapter, including operating expenses. The state  
7 board shall determine the amount of this fee based on the latest  
8 actuarial valuation of the system.

9 (d) Where a municipal corporation has elected to make relief  
10 provisions of this chapter available to its reserve officers, an  
11 annual fee for each reserve officer paid by the municipal corporation  
12 that is sufficient to pay the full costs of covering the reserve  
13 officer under the relief provisions of this chapter, including  
14 operating expenses. The state board shall determine the amount of  
15 this fee based on the latest actuarial valuation of the system.

16 (e) Where a municipal corporation has elected to make the  
17 retirement pension provisions of this chapter available to members of  
18 its fire department, an annual fee of (~~sixty~~) ninety dollars for  
19 each of its firefighters electing to enroll, (~~thirty~~) forty-five  
20 dollars of which shall be paid by the municipality and (~~thirty~~)  
21 forty-five dollars of which shall be paid by the firefighter.  
22 However, nothing in this section prohibits any municipality from  
23 voluntarily paying the firefighters' fee for this retirement pension  
24 coverage.

25 (f) Where an emergency medical service district has elected to  
26 make the retirement pension provisions of this chapter available to  
27 its emergency workers, for each emergency worker electing to enroll:  
28 (i) An annual fee of thirty dollars shall be paid by the emergency  
29 worker; and (ii) an annual fee paid by the emergency medical service  
30 district that, together with the thirty dollar fee per emergency  
31 worker, is sufficient to pay the full costs of covering the emergency  
32 worker under the retirement pension benefits provided under this  
33 chapter, including operating expenses. The state board shall  
34 determine the amount of this fee based on the latest actuarial  
35 valuation of the system. However, nothing in this section prohibits  
36 any emergency medical service district from voluntarily paying the  
37 emergency workers' fees for this retirement pension coverage.

38 (g) Where a municipal corporation has elected to make the  
39 retirement pension provisions of this chapter available to its  
40 reserve officers, for each reserve officer electing to enroll: (i) An

1 annual fee of thirty dollars shall be paid by the reserve officer;  
2 and (ii) an annual fee paid by the municipal corporation that,  
3 together with the thirty dollar fee per reserve officer, is  
4 sufficient to pay the full costs of covering the reserve officer  
5 under the retirement pension benefits provided under this chapter,  
6 including operating expenses. The state board shall determine the  
7 amount of this fee based on the latest actuarial valuation of the  
8 system. However, nothing in this section prohibits any municipal  
9 corporation from voluntarily paying the reserve officers' fees for  
10 this retirement pension coverage.

11 (h) Moneys transferred from the administrative fund, as provided  
12 under subsection (4) of this section, which may only be used to pay  
13 relief and retirement pensions for firefighters.

14 (i) Earnings from the investment of moneys in the principal fund.

15 (2) The state investment board, upon request of the state  
16 treasurer shall have full power to invest, reinvest, manage,  
17 contract, sell, or exchange investments acquired from that portion of  
18 the amounts credited to the principal fund as is not, in the judgment  
19 of the state board, required to meet current withdrawals. Investments  
20 shall be made in the manner prescribed by RCW 43.84.150 and not  
21 otherwise.

22 All bonds, investments, or other obligations purchased by the  
23 state investment board shall be placed in the custody of the state  
24 treasurer, and he or she shall collect the principal thereof and  
25 interest thereon when due.

26 The state investment board may sell any of the bonds,  
27 investments, or obligations so acquired and the proceeds thereof  
28 shall be paid to the state treasurer.

29 (3) The interest, earnings, and proceeds from the sale and  
30 redemption of any investments held by the principal fund and invested  
31 by the state investment board shall be credited to and form a part of  
32 the principal fund, less the allocation to the state investment board  
33 expense account pursuant to RCW 43.33A.160.

34 Subject to restrictions contained in this chapter, all amounts  
35 credited to the principal fund shall be available for making the  
36 benefit payments required by this chapter.

37 The state treasurer shall make an annual report showing the  
38 condition of the fund.

39 (4) The volunteer firefighters' and reserve officers'  
40 administrative fund is created in the state treasury. Moneys in the

1 fund, including unanticipated revenues under RCW 43.79.270, may be  
2 spent only after appropriation, and may be used only for operating  
3 expenses of the volunteer firefighters' and reserve officers' relief  
4 and pension principal fund, the operating expenses of the volunteer  
5 firefighters' and reserve officers' administrative fund, or for  
6 transfer from the administrative fund to the principal fund.

7 (a) Forty percent of all moneys received by the state from taxes  
8 on fire insurance premiums shall be paid into the state treasury and  
9 credited to the administrative fund.

10 (b) The state board shall compute a percentage of the amounts  
11 credited to the administrative fund to be paid into the principal  
12 fund.

13 (c) For the purpose of providing amounts to be used to defray the  
14 cost of administration of the principal and administrative funds, the  
15 state board shall ascertain at the beginning of each biennium and  
16 request from the legislature an appropriation from the administrative  
17 fund sufficient to cover estimated expenses for the biennium.

18 **Sec. 2.** RCW 41.24.170 and 2003 c 62 s 1 are each amended to read  
19 as follows:

20 (1) Except as provided in RCW 41.24.410, whenever any participant  
21 has been a member and served honorably for a period of ten years or  
22 more as an active member in any capacity, of any regularly organized  
23 fire department or law enforcement agency of any municipality in this  
24 state, and which municipality has adopted appropriate legislation  
25 allowing its firefighters or reserve officers to enroll in the  
26 retirement pension provisions of this chapter, and the participant  
27 has enrolled under the retirement pension provisions and has reached  
28 the age of sixty-five years, the board of trustees shall order and  
29 direct that he or she be retired and be paid a monthly pension from  
30 the principal fund as provided in this section.

31 (2)(a) Until July 1, 2019, whenever a participant has been a  
32 member, and served honorably for a period of twenty-five years or  
33 more as an active member in any capacity, of any regularly organized  
34 volunteer fire department or law enforcement agency of any  
35 municipality in this state, and he or she has reached the age of  
36 sixty-five years, and the annual retirement fee has been paid for a  
37 period of twenty-five years, the board of trustees shall order and  
38 direct that he or she be retired and such participant be paid a

1 monthly pension of three hundred fifty dollars from the fund for the  
2 balance of that participant's life.

3 (b) Beginning July 1, 2020, whenever a participant has been a  
4 member, and served honorably for a period of twenty-five years or  
5 more as an active member in any capacity, of any regularly organized  
6 volunteer fire department or law enforcement agency of any  
7 municipality in this state, and he or she has reached the age of  
8 sixty-five years, and the annual retirement fee has been paid for  
9 each year of active membership, but at least twenty-five years, the  
10 board of trustees shall order and direct that he or she be retired  
11 and such participant be paid a monthly pension of three hundred fifty  
12 dollars, plus an additional ten dollars per month for each year that  
13 the retirement fee was paid beyond twenty-five years, from the fund  
14 for the balance of that participant's life.

15 (3) Whenever any participant has been a member, and served  
16 honorably for a period of twenty-five years or more as an active  
17 member in any capacity, of any regularly organized volunteer fire  
18 department or law enforcement agency of any municipality in this  
19 state, and the participant has reached the age of sixty-five years,  
20 and the annual retirement fee has been paid for a period of less than  
21 twenty-five years, the board of trustees shall order and direct that  
22 he or she be retired and that such participant shall receive a  
23 minimum monthly pension of fifty dollars increased by the sum of ten  
24 dollars each month for each year the annual fee has been paid, but  
25 not to exceed ((the maximum monthly pension provided in this  
26 section)) three hundred fifty dollars, for the balance of the  
27 participant's life.

28 (4) No pension provided in this section may become payable before  
29 the sixty-fifth birthday of the participant, nor for any service less  
30 than twenty-five years: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That:

31 ((~~1~~)) (a) Any participant, who is older than fifty-nine years  
32 of age, less than sixty-five years of age, and has completed twenty-  
33 five years or more of service may irrevocably elect a reduced monthly  
34 pension in lieu of the pension that participant would be entitled to  
35 under this section at age sixty-five. The participant who elects this  
36 option shall receive the reduced pension for the balance of his or  
37 her life. The reduced monthly pension is calculated as a percentage  
38 of the pension the participant would be entitled to at age sixty-  
39 five. The percentage used in the calculation is based upon the age of  
40 the participant at the time of retirement as follows:

1       Age 60       Sixty percent  
2       Age 61       Sixty-eight percent  
3       Age 62       Seventy-six percent  
4       Age 63       Eighty-four percent  
5       Age 64       Ninety-two percent

6       ~~((2))~~ (b) If a participant is age sixty-five or older but has  
7 less than twenty-five years of service, the participant is entitled  
8 to a reduced benefit. The reduced benefit shall be computed as  
9 follows:

10       ~~((a))~~ (i) Upon completion of ten years, but less than fifteen  
11 years of service, a monthly pension equal to twenty percent of such  
12 pension as the participant would have been entitled to receive at age  
13 sixty-five after twenty-five years of service;

14       ~~((b))~~ (ii) Upon completion of fifteen years, but less than  
15 twenty years of service, a monthly pension equal to thirty-five  
16 percent of such pension as the participant would have been entitled  
17 to receive at age sixty-five after twenty-five years of service; and

18       ~~((c))~~ (iii) Upon completion of twenty years, but less than  
19 twenty-five years of service, a monthly pension equal to seventy-five  
20 percent of such pension as the participant would have been entitled  
21 to receive at age sixty-five after twenty-five years of service.

22       ~~((3))~~ (c) If a participant with less than twenty-five years of  
23 service elects to retire after turning age sixty but before turning  
24 age sixty-five, the participant's retirement allowance is subject:

25       ~~((a))~~ (i) First to the reduction under (b) of this subsection  
26 ~~((2) of this section)~~ based upon the participant's years of  
27 service; and

28       ~~((b))~~ (ii) Second to the reduction under (a) of this subsection  
29 ~~((1) of this section)~~ based upon the participant's age.

30       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
31 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
32 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
33 effect July 1, 2019.

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