
Appropriations Committee

HB 1718

Brief Description: Authorizing membership in the Washington public safety employees' retirement system for employees who provide nursing care to, or ensure the custody and safety of, offender, probationary, and patient populations in institutions and centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Ormsby, Kilduff, Sullivan, Hayes, Tharinger, MacEwen, Sawyer, Zeiger, Walsh, Rodne, Hudgins, Van De Wege, Appleton, Muri, Reykdal, Tarleton and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides membership in the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) for employees of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (Veterans Affairs) and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) that provide nursing care, or to ensure the custody or safety in state institutions including the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, the mental health hospitals, the Child Study and Treatment Center, the Special Commitment Center, and residential sites serving developmentally disabled patients or offenders.
- Provides membership in the PSERS to state, city, and county corrections personnel who are employed by a PSERS employer and whose primary responsibility is to provide nursing care, or ensure the custody and safety of offender and patient populations.
- Adds the Veterans Affairs and the DSHS as eligible PSERS employers.
- Permits members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plan 2 or Plan 3 made newly eligible for the PSERS to choose between remaining in the PERS or transferring to the PSERS for periods of future service.

Hearing Date: 2/11/15

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

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 Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) was created in 2004 and opened to members on July 1, 2006. The PSERS provides retirement benefits for state and local government employees who work in positions with law enforcement duties but are not eligible for membership in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System. Members of the PSERS with at least 20 years of service will be eligible for full retirement benefits from age 60, five years earlier than the regular retirement age in Public Employees' Retirement System Plans 2 and 3. Members of the PSERS with 20 years of service may also early retire beginning at age 53 with a 3 percent reduction in benefits per year of early retirement.

Membership in the PSERS is restricted by an individual's employer and by specific job criteria. The PSERS employers are defined as the Department of Corrections, the Department of Natural Resources, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Gambling Commission, the Washington State Patrol, the Liquor Control Board, county corrections departments, and the corrections departments of municipalities not classified as First Class cities, and employers employing statewide elective officials.

Summary of Bill:

Employees of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services that provide nursing care, custody or safety in state institutions including the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, the mental health hospitals, the Child Study and Treatment Center, the Special Commitment Center, and residential sites serving developmentally disabled patients or offenders are eligible for membership in the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) beginning January 1, 2016.

In addition to corrections officers, membership in the PSERS is provided to other state, city, and county corrections personnel whose primary responsibility is to provide direct care, or ensure the custody and safety of offender and patient populations.

Members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plan 2 or Plan 3 made newly eligible for the PSERS choose between remaining in the PERS or transferring to the PSERS for periods of future service. The choice to transfer to the PSERS must be made during an election period between January 1, 2016, and March 1, 2016. Membership in the PSERS for transferring PERS members is prospective, and past service credit remains in the PERS, making members' eventual retirement calculated under the dual membership rules.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.