

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5296

As Passed Senate, February 23, 2021

Title: An act relating to the definition of index for the Washington state patrol retirement system.

Brief Description: Modifying the definition of index for the Washington state patrol retirement system.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Conway, Dozier, Muzzall, Rivers, Van De Wege and Warnick; by request of Select Committee on Pension Policy.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 1/28/21, 2/11/21 [DP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/23/21, 48-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the reference to Tacoma-Bremerton from the statute that defines the index used to adjust the benefits for retirees of the Washington State Patrol Retirement System.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Capital; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Wilson, L., Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Braun, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Dhingra, Gildon, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Lias, Mullet, Muzzall, Pedersen, Rivers, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick and Wellman.

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7460)

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

Background: The Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) covers commissioned officers of the Washington State Patrol. As required by statute, WSPRS retiree benefits are adjusted annually based specifically on the consumer price index (CPI) for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, Washington area for urban wage earners and clerical workers, up to 3 percent each year.

In 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is responsible for producing the CPIs nationally, modified the geographic sample of the Seattle, Washington area CPI to no longer include Island, Kitsap, and Thurston counties. It was renamed the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue CPI.

Even though retirees from other pension systems have their benefits adjusted based on the same index, other statutes related to the adjustments include a general reference to the Seattle, Washington area CPI rather than identifying it by the specific name.

Summary of Bill: The reference to Tacoma-Bremerton is removed from the statute that defines the index used to adjust the benefits for retirees of the WSPRS.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill was worked by the Select Committee on Pension Policy. This is a technical fix to WSPRS language and ensures that retired Washington State Patrol members continue to get their cost of living adjustment. This lines the WSPRS language up with every other pension system.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mark Schoesler, Prime Sponsor; Davor Gjurasic, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association; Jason Linn, Washington State Patrol Lieutenants and Captains Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.