STATE OF NEW YORK

4961

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 19, 2021

Introduced by Sen. GOUNARDES -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Civil Service and Pensions

AN ACT to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to including certain employees who were employed in public service but became members of a retirement system at a later date for eligibility for those who participated in the World Trade Center rescue, recovery or cleanup operations

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 36 of section 2 of the retirement and social security law, as added by chapter 489 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

(e) "Participated in World Trade Center rescue, recovery or cleanup operations" shall mean any member who: (i) participated in the rescue, recovery, or cleanup operations at the World Trade Center site, as defined in paragraph (f) of this subdivision; (ii) worked at the Fresh Kills Land Fill in New York; (iii) worked at the New York city morgue or the temporary morgue on pier locations on the west side of Manhattan; (iv) manned the barges between the west side of Manhattan and the Fresh Kills Land Fill in New York; (v) repaired, cleaned or rehabilitated vehicles or equipment, including emergency vehicle radio equipment owned by the city of New York that were contaminated by debris in the World Trade Center site, as defined in paragraph (f) of this subdivision, regardless of whether the work on the repair, cleaning or rehabilitation of said vehicles and equipment was performed within the World Trade Center site, provided such work was performed prior to decontamination of such vehicles or equipment; or (vi) worked in the following departments, worksites and titles: (A) New York City Police Department at 11 Metrotec Center in Brooklyn or 1 Police Plaza in Manhattan as a Police Communication Technician (PCT), Supervisor Police Communication Technician (SPCT), Principal Police Communication Technician I, Principal

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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Police Communication Technician II, Principal Police Communication Technician III, Administrative Manager - Communications, or in the Police Administrative Aide title series; (B) Fire Department of the City of New York at 35 Empire Boulevard in Brooklyn, 79th Street Transverse in Manhattan, 83-98 Woodhaven Boulevard in Queens, 1129 East 180 Street in the Bronx, 65 Slosson Avenue in Staten Island, 9 Metrotec Center in Brooklyn, or 25 Rockaway Avenue in Brooklyn as Fire Alarm Dispatchers (FAD), Supervising Fire Alarm Dispatchers I (SFAD), Supervising Fire Alarm Dispatchers II (Borough Supervisor), Deputy Director & Director Fire Dispatch Operations, or Assistant Commissioner for Communications; (C) for the Fire Department of the City of New York's Emergency Medical Service at 1 or 9 Metrotec Centers in Brooklyn, or 55-30 58 Street in Maspeth Queens as Emergency Medical Specialist-Level I (EMT), Emergency Medical Specialist Level II-(Paramedic), Supervising Emergency Medical Specialist Level I (LT), Supervising Emergency Medical Specialist Level II (Capt), Deputy Chief EMS Communications, or Division Commander EMS Communications. **For purposes of this paragraph, the term "member" shall include each person who during the qualifying period was in the employment of a public employer which then participated for such employees in a public retirement system in this state, irrespective of whether the person was a participant in such system at that time, provided that the person has become a participant in such retirement system and has purchased service credit for a period of time that includes some or all of the qualifying period in accordance with provisions of law applicable to such purchase of service credit.**

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

FISCAL NOTE.-- Pursuant to Legislative Law, Section 50:

This bill would expand the definition of a member who participated in World Trade Center rescue, recovery or cleanup operations. The term member shall include any person during the qualifying period who was employed by a public employer participating in the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) irrespective of whether the employee was a participant of the system at that time. The employee must have become a participant in NYSLRS since that time and purchased service credit for some or all of qualifying period.

If this bill is enacted, it would reclassify certain current and future retirement benefits. The cost of the revised benefit will depend upon the applicant's age, service, salary, plan, and benefit type otherwise payable.

Benefit without enactment:	None	Ordinary Disability	In Performance of Duty Disability	Service
Cost for WTC benefit:	9 times salary	5 times salary	2.5 times salary	2 times salary

This bill would also lead to more deaths being classified as "accidental". For each death classified as accidental due to this bill, the cost would depend on the age, service, salary, plan, and status at time of death. It is estimated that the cost for each Employees' Retirement System (ERS) member affected would average approximately 3.5 times final average salary. The estimated cost for each Police and Fire Retirement System (PFRS) member would average approximately 11 times final average salary.

ERS Costs: Pursuant to Section 25 of the Retirement and Social Security Law, the increased cost to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System would be borne entirely by the State of New York and

would require an itemized appropriation sufficient to pay the cost of the provision.

PFRS Costs: These costs would be shared by the State of New York and the participating employers in the PFRS.

Summary of relevant resources:

Membership data as of March 31, 2020 was used in measuring the impact of the proposed change, the same data used in the April 1, 2020 actuarial valuation. Distributions and other statistics can be found in the 2020 Report of the Actuary and the 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The actuarial assumptions and methods used are described in the 2020 Annual Report to the Comptroller on Actuarial Assumptions, and the Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York: Audit and Control.

The Market Assets and GASB Disclosures are found in the March 31, 2020 New York State and Local Retirement System Financial Statements and Supplementary Information.

I am a member of the American Academy of Actuaries and meet the Qualification Standards to render the actuarial opinion contained herein.

This fiscal note does not constitute a legal opinion on the viability of the proposed change nor is it intended to serve as a substitute for the professional judgment of an attorney.

This estimate, dated February 19, 2021, and intended for use only during the 2021 Legislative Session, is Fiscal Note No. 2021-81, prepared by the Actuary for the New York State and Local Retirement System.