

STATE OF NEW YORK

1889--A

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 16, 2021

Introduced by Sens. SKOUFIS, ADDABBO, JACKSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Civil Service and Pensions -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to providing accidental disability retirement benefits for fire protection specialists

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

1 Section 1. The retirement and social security law is amended by adding
2 a new section 605-f to read as follows:

3 § 605-f. Accidental disability retirement for fire protection special-
4 ists. a. A member employed as a fire protection specialist I, fire
5 protection specialist II or fire protection specialist III shall be
6 entitled to an accidental disability retirement allowance if, at the
7 time application therefor is filed, such member is:

8 1. Physically or mentally incapacitated for performance of duty as the
9 natural and proximate result of an accident, unless the contrary be
10 proved by competent evidence, not caused by his or her own willful
11 negligence, sustained in such service and while actually a member of the
12 retirement system; and

13 2. Actually in service upon which his or her membership is based.
14 However, in a case where a member is discontinued from service subse-
15 quent to the accident, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and provided
16 that the member meets the requirements of paragraph one of this subdivi-
17 sion, application may be made not later than two years after the member
18 is first discontinued from service.

19 b. Application for an accidental disability retirement allowance for
20 such a member may be made by:

21 1. Such member; or

22 2. The head of the department in which such member is employed; or

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

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1 3. Any person acting on behalf of and authorized by such member.

2 c. 1. After the filing of such an application, such member shall be
3 given one or more medical examinations. No such application shall be
4 approved, however, unless the member or some other person on his or her
5 behalf shall have filed written notice in the office of the comptroller
6 within ninety days after the accident, setting forth:

7 (a) The time when and the place where such accident occurred; and

8 (b) The particulars thereof; and

9 (c) The nature and extent of the member's injuries; and

10 (d) His or her alleged incapacity.

11 2. The notice herein required need not be given:

12 (a) If the notice of such accident shall be filed in accordance with
13 the provisions of the workers' compensation law of any state within
14 which a participating employer in New York State shall have its employ-
15 ees located or performing functions and duties within the normal scope
16 of their employment; or

17 (b) If the application for accidental disability retirement is filed
18 within one year after the date of such accident; or

19 (c) If a failure to file notice has been excused for good cause shown
20 as provided by rules and regulations promulgated by the comptroller.

21 d. If the comptroller determines that the member is physically or
22 mentally incapacitated for the performance of duty and ought to be
23 retired for accidental disability, such member shall be so retired. Such
24 retirement shall be effective as of a date approved by the comptroller.

25 e. The annual retirement allowance payable upon accidental disability
26 retirement shall be a pension of three-quarters of his or her final
27 average salary. The payment of such pension shall be subject to the
28 provisions of section sixty-four of this chapter.

29 f. If the member, at the time of the filing of an application under
30 the provisions of subdivision b of this section, is eligible for a
31 service retirement benefit, then and in that event, he or she may simul-
32 taneously file an application for service retirement in accordance with
33 the provisions of section seventy of this chapter, provided that the
34 member indicates on the application for service retirement that such
35 application is filed without prejudice to the application for accidental
36 disability retirement.

37 g. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, this section shall
38 apply to fire protection specialists I, fire protection specialists II
39 and fire protection specialists III who were hired on or after July
40 twenty-seventh, nineteen hundred seventy-six.

41 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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

This bill would allow State employees in civil service job titles fire protection specialist 1, 2, or 3, to be eligible to receive an accidental disability benefit of three-quarters of final average salary, less worker's compensation. Currently, such members are eligible for a benefit of one-third of final average salary in the event of an accidental or ordinary disability.

If this legislation is enacted during the 2021 legislative session, we anticipate that there will be an increase of approximately \$83,000 in the annual contributions of the State of New York for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. In future years, this cost will vary as the billing rates and salary of the affected members change.

In addition to the annual contributions discussed above, there will be an immediate past service cost of approximately \$170,000 which will be

borne by the State of New York as a one-time payment. This estimate is based on the assumption that payment will be made on March 1, 2022.

These estimated costs are based on 143 affected members employed by the State of New York, with annual salary of approximately \$12.1 million as of March 31, 2020. The affected members were identified using job title codes provided by the office of Assemblyman Peter J. Abbate, Jr.

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 17, 2021, and intended for use only during the 2021 Legislative Session, is Fiscal Note No. 2021-79, prepared by the Actuary for the New York State and Local Retirement System.