STATE OF NEW YORK

6619

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 10, 2021

Introduced by Sen. GOUNARDES -- (at request of the State Comptroller) -- 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 the ordinary death benefit

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

Section 1. The closing paragraph of paragraph 2 of subdivision a of section 448 of the retirement and social security law, as amended by chapter 513 of the laws of 2010, is amended to read as follows:

In the case of a member of the New York state teachers' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age sixty-one, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-six per centum of the benefit otherwise payable and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to four per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below sixty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of a member of the New York city employees' retirement system, the New York city board of education retirement system or the New York city teachers' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age sixty-one, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-five per centum of the benefit otherwise payable and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to five per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below fifty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of any member of the New York state and local employees' retirement system who is permitted to retire without regard to age or a member of the New York state and local police and fire retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age [~~sixty-one~~] **sixty-two if such member's date of membership is prior to April first,**

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

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two thousand twelve or attainment of age sixty-three if such member's date of membership is on or after April first, two thousand twelve, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-seven per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to three per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below seventy per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of any other member of the New York state and local employees' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age [~~sixty-one~~] sixty-two if such member's date of membership is prior to April first, two thousand twelve or attainment of age sixty-three if such member's date of membership is on or after April first, two thousand twelve, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-six per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to four per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below sixty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. Upon retirement from any retirement system, the benefit in force shall be reduced by fifty per centum; upon completion of the first year of retirement, the benefit in force at the time of retirement shall be reduced by an additional twenty-five per centum, and upon commencement of the third year of retirement, the benefit shall be ten per centum of the benefit in force at age sixty, if any, or at the time of retirement if retirement preceded such age; provided, however, the benefit in retirement shall not be reduced below ten per centum of the benefit in force at age sixty, if any, or at the time of retirement if retirement preceded such age. Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph to the contrary, the benefit for a retiree from the New York state and local employees' retirement system shall not be reduced below ten per centum of the benefit in force at the time of retirement.

§ 2. The closing paragraph of paragraph 2 of subdivision a of section 508 of the retirement and social security law, as amended by chapter 513 of the laws of 2010, is amended to read as follows:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, in the case of a member of the New York state teachers' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age sixty-one, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-six per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to four per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below sixty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of a member of the New York city employees' retirement system, the New York city board of education retirement system or the New York city teachers' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age sixty-one, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-five per centum of the benefit otherwise payable and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to five per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below fifty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of any member of the New York state and local employees' retirement system who is permitted to retire without regard to age, commencing upon attainment of age [~~sixty-one~~] sixty-two if such member's date of membership is prior to April first, two thousand twelve or attainment of age sixty-three if such member's date of membership is on or after April first,

two thousand twelve, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-seven per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to three per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below seventy per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of any other member of the New York state and local employees' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age [~~sixty-one~~] sixty-two if such member's date of membership is prior to April first, two thousand twelve or attainment of age sixty-three if such member's date of membership is on or after April first, two thousand twelve, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-six per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to four per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below sixty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. Upon retirement from any retirement system, the benefit in force shall be reduced by fifty per centum; upon completion of the first year of retirement, the benefit in force at the time of retirement shall be reduced by an additional twenty-five per centum, and upon commencement of the third year of retirement, the benefit shall be ten per centum of the benefit in force at age sixty, if any, or at the time of retirement if retirement preceded such age; provided, however, the benefit in retirement shall not be reduced below ten per centum of the benefit in force at age sixty, if any, or at the time of retirement if retirement preceded such age. Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph to the contrary, the benefit for a retiree from the New York state and local employees' retirement system shall not be reduced below ten per centum of the benefit in force at the time of retirement.

§ 3. The closing subparagraph of paragraph 2 of subdivision a of section 606 of the retirement and social security law, as amended by chapter 513 of the laws of 2010, is amended to read as follows:

In the case of a member of the New York state teachers' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age sixty-one, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-six per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to four per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below sixty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of a member of the New York city employees' retirement system, the New York city board of education retirement system or the New York city teachers' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age sixty-one, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-five per centum of the benefit otherwise payable and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to five per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below fifty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of any member of the New York state and local employees' retirement system who is permitted to retire without regard to age, commencing upon attainment of age [~~sixty-one~~] sixty-two if such member's date of membership is prior to April first, two thousand twelve or attainment of age sixty-three if such member's date of membership is on or after April first, two thousand twelve, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the

member is in service to ninety-seven per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to three per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below seventy per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. In the case of any other member of the New York state and local employees' retirement system, commencing upon attainment of age [~~sixty-one~~] **sixty-two if such member's date of membership is prior to April first, two thousand twelve or attainment of age sixty-three if such member's date of membership is on or after April first, two thousand twelve**, the benefit otherwise provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be reduced while the member is in service to ninety-six per centum of the benefit otherwise payable, and each year thereafter the benefit payable shall be reduced by an amount equal to four per centum per year of the original benefit otherwise payable, but not below sixty per centum of the original benefit otherwise payable. Upon retirement, from any retirement system, the benefit in force shall be reduced by fifty per centum; upon completion of the first year of retirement, the benefit in force at the time of retirement shall be reduced by an additional twenty-five per centum, and upon commencement of the third year of retirement, the benefit shall be ten per centum of the benefit in force at age sixty, if any, or at the time of retirement if retirement preceded such age; provided, however, the benefit in retirement shall not be reduced below ten per centum of the benefit in force at age sixty, if any, or at the time of retirement if retirement preceded such age. Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph to the contrary, the benefit for a retiree from the New York state and local employees' retirement system shall not be reduced below ten per centum of the benefit in force at the time of retirement.

§ 4. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the provisions of this act shall not be subject to section 25 of the retirement and social security law.

§ 5. This act shall take effect on the first of April next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.

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

This bill would delay reductions in the ordinary death benefits payable to beneficiaries of the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (ERS) and New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System (PFRS), ensuring that no reduction applies before a member becomes eligible for an unreduced retirement benefit. Currently, annual reductions of 4% (ERS age-based plans) or 3% (all other plans) are applied to ordinary death benefits immediately when a member attains age 61. This bill would delay the reductions until age 62 for members in Tiers 1-5, and age 63 for members in Tier 6.

Insofar as this bill affects the ERS, if this legislation is enacted during the 2021 legislative session, there would be an increase in the present value of future costs of approximately $19.4 million which would be shared by the State of New York and all of the participating employers in the ERS. The estimated first year cost would be approximately $954,000 to the State of New York and approximately $1.37 million to the participating employers in the ERS.

Insofar as this bill affects PFRS, if this legislation is enacted during the 2021 legislative session, we anticipate that the cost will be negligible.

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 actuari-

al 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 April 1, 2021, and intended for use only during the 2021 Legislative Session, is Fiscal Note No. 2021-113, prepared by the Actuary for the New York State and Local Retirement System.