STATE OF NEW YORK

6636--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

April 25, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. PHEFFER AMATO, McDONALD, COLTON, SILLITTI, BUTTENSCHON, LUNSFORD -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Employees -- recommitted to the Committee on Governmental Employees in accordance with Assembly Rule 3, sec. 2 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the retirement and social security law, the education law and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to providing cost-of-living adjustments

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

Section 1. Subdivision c of section 78-a of the retirement and social security law, as added by chapter 125 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

c. Said cost-of-living adjustment shall be computed on a base benefit amount [~~not to exceed~~] **of** eighteen thousand dollars of the annual retirement allowance defined in subdivision b of this section**, provided, however, such base benefit amount shall be increased annually by reference to the consumer price index (all urban consumers, CPI-U, U.S. city average, all items, 1982-84=100), published by the United States bureau of labor statistics, for each applicable calendar year beginning on September first, two thousand twenty-four. The annual percentage increase to the base amount shall equal fifty percent of the annual inflation, as determined from the increase in the consumer price index in the one year period ending on the March thirty-first prior to the cost-of-living adjustment effective on the ensuing September first. Said percentage shall then be rounded up to the next higher one-tenth of one percent and shall not exceed three percent nor be less than one percent**.

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

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§ 2. Subdivision c of section 378-a of the retirement and social security law, as added by chapter 125 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

c. Said cost-of-living adjustment shall be computed on a base benefit amount [~~not to exceed~~] of eighteen thousand dollars of the annual retirement allowance defined in subdivision b of this section, provided, however, such base benefit amount shall be increased annually by reference to the consumer price index (all urban consumers, CPI-U, U.S. city average, all items, 1982-84=100), published by the United States bureau of labor statistics, for each applicable calendar year beginning on September first, two thousand twenty-four. The annual percentage increase to the base amount shall equal fifty percent of the annual inflation, as determined from the increase in the consumer price index in the one year period ending on the March thirty-first prior to the cost-of-living adjustment effective on the ensuing September first. Said percentage shall then be rounded up to the next higher one-tenth of one percent and shall not exceed three percent nor be less than one percent.

§ 3. Subdivision c of section 532-a of the education law, as added by chapter 125 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

c. Said cost-of-living adjustment shall be computed on a base benefit amount [~~not to exceed~~] of eighteen thousand dollars of the annual retirement allowance defined in subdivision b of this section, provided, however, such base benefit amount shall be increased annually by reference to the consumer price index (all urban consumers, CPI-U, U.S. city average, all items, 1982-84=100), published by the United States bureau of labor statistics, for each applicable calendar year beginning on September first, two thousand twenty-four. The annual percentage increase to the base amount shall equal fifty percent of the annual inflation, as determined from the increase in the consumer price index in the one year period ending on the March thirty-first prior to the cost-of-living adjustment effective on the ensuing September first. Said percentage shall then be rounded up to the next higher one-tenth of one percent and shall not exceed three percent nor be less than one percent.

§ 4. Subdivision c of section 13-696 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by chapter 125 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

c. Said cost-of-living adjustment shall be computed on a base benefit amount [~~not to exceed~~] of eighteen thousand dollars of the annual fixed retirement allowance defined in subdivision b of this section, provided, however, such base benefit amount shall be increased annually by reference to the consumer price index (all urban consumers, CPI-U, U.S. city average, all items, 1982-84=100), published by the United States bureau of labor statistics, for each applicable calendar year beginning on September first, two thousand twenty-four. The annual percentage increase to the base amount shall equal fifty percent of the annual inflation, as determined from the increase in the consumer price index in the one year period ending on the March thirty-first prior to the cost-of-living adjustment effective on the ensuing September first. Said percentage shall then be rounded up to the next higher one-tenth of one percent and shall not exceed three percent nor be less than one percent.

§ 5. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, none of the provisions of this act shall be subject to section 25 of the retirement and social security law.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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

This bill would provide an increase in the defined benefit cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for New York public retirement systems. Starting with the payment in September 2024, the base benefit for computation of the annual COLA, currently $18,000, will be increased annually by 50% of the annual inflation rate not to exceed 3% or be less than 1%.

The provisions of Section 25 of the Retirement and Social Security Law shall not apply.

This proposal primarily benefits current and former members of Tiers 1 - 5. The cost of this benefit improvement will disproportionately be borne by current and future members of Tier 6.

Insofar as this bill affects the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System (NYSLERS), the increased costs would be shared by the State of New York and the local participating employers in the NYSLERS. If this bill were enacted during the 2024 Legislative Session, the increase in the present value of benefits would be approximately $1.30 billion.

NYSLERS	Increase in present value benefits	Increase in required contributions
Tiers 1 - 5	$1.03 billion	$634 million
Tier 6	$0.27 billion	$663 million
Total	$1.30 billion	$1.30 billion

In the NYSLERS, this benefit improvement will be funded by increasing the billing rates charged annually to cover both retrospective and prospective benefit increases. The annual contribution required of all participating employers in NYSLERS is 0.4% of billable salary, or approximately $51 million to the State of New York and approximately $76 million to the local participating employers. This **permanent annual cost** will vary in subsequent billing cycles with changes in the billing rate and salary of the affected members.

Insofar as this bill affects the New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System (NYSLPFRS), the increased costs would be shared by the State of New York and the local participating employers in the NYSLPFRS. If this bill were enacted during the 2024 Legislative Session, the increase in the present value of benefits would be approximately $189 million.

NYSLPFRS	Increase in present value benefits	Increase in required contributions
Tiers 1 - 5	$150 million	$80 million
Tier 6	$39 million	$109 million
Total	$189 million	$189 million

In the NYSLPFRS, this benefit improvement will be funded by increasing the billing rates charged annually to cover both retrospective and prospective benefit increases. The annual contribution required of all participating employers in NYSLPFRS is 0.4% of billable salary, or approximately $3.4 million to the State of New York and approximately $14 million to the local participating employers. This **permanent annual cost** will vary in subsequent billing cycles with changes in the billing rate and salary of the affected members.

We anticipate some administrative costs to implement the provisions of this legislation.

Summary of relevant resources:

Membership data as of March 31, 2023 was used in measuring the impact of the proposed change, the same data used in the April 1, 2023 actuarial valuation. Distributions and other statistics can be found in the 2023 Report of the Actuary and the 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

The actuarial assumptions and methods used are described in the 2023 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, 2023 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 March 8, 2024, and intended for use only during the 2024 Legislative Session, is Fiscal Note No. 2024-87, prepared by the Actuary for the New York State and Local Retirement System.